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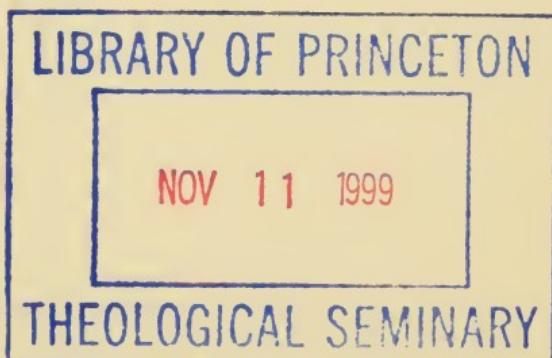
THE BOOK OF FAITH IN GOD

THE BOOK OF FAITH IN GOD

BY

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AUTHOR OF "THE BOOK OF GOD'S PROVIDENCE," "THE BOOK OF
ANSWERED PRAYER," ETC.



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TO MY MOTHER

FOREWORD

“THE Book of FAITH IN GOD” is a narrative of incidents in the lives of some of those whom God has taught to confide in him; who learned to be calm and serene in circumstances that bring many people to the verge of panic; who knew that they were in God’s hands, and so could say with gladness, “Thy will be done”; who, by constant effort to do their best while they waited for the revelation of God’s will, proved that theirs was a living faith; who found their greatest joy in abiding in the presence of him who honors the faith of those who wait for him.

JOHN T. FARIS.

Philadelphia,
April, 1915.

"For this God is our God for ever and ever:
He will be our guide even unto death."

Ps. 48:14

"O taste and see that the Lord is good."
Ps. 34:8.

"Now abideth faith. . . ."
I COR. 13:13.

". . . Above all, taking the shield of faith. . . ."
EPH. 6:16.

". . . Draw near . . . in full assurance of faith . . ."
HEB. 10:22.

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ONE
IN THE HANDS OF GOD

“The way is dark, my Father! Cloud on cloud
Is gathering thickly o'er my head, and loud
The thunder roars above me. See, I stand
Like one bewildered! Father, take my hand,
And through the gloom
Lead safely home
Thy child.”

“O God of Calvary: O Lord divine!
Hold me and I am held! I cannot slide
When pressing closely to thy bleeding side,
Though men and devils 'gainst my soul combine!
Nor shall I wander far, if in the veil
Of Jesus' flesh, my anchor has been cast;
But I shall hear the welcome plaudit, ‘Hail,
Beloved, enter into rest!’ at last.”

I

THE UNCHANGING GOD

A POET of Israel who was grieving for the downfall of Jerusalem and for the lowly condition of himself and his countrymen at length turned his thoughts to God and cried to him. In him he found something sure, a rock on which he could rest. "I have been unhappy, because of these things," was his cry, "but thou art the same; these outward things have changed, but thou canst not change."

He was right. God changes not; he is ever the same. In the midst of all our griefs and our tears because of changes and disappointments, vexations and griefs, we can turn to God. For he is the "I am," who revealed himself to Moses. When he spoke of himself in this way he did not say what he would be some day; he said, "I am." And the great I Am, the unchanging God, is our refuge, our present help in time of trouble. "Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea; though the waters thereof roar and be troubled; though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof."

We ought to stop and think often just how much the unchangeableness of God means to us.

It tells us what is his attitude to us. "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son." He

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loved the world then, and he loves the world now. God is love. He is no Jekyll and Hyde, sometimes benevolent, at other times malevolent. But always he is our physician in time of moral sickness, our friend in hours of sorrow as in hours of joy, our Father when, as children, we feel the need of him.

When we read how Christ walked the earth and healed the sick, sought the poor and cheered their hearts, and talked to men of the love of the Father, it is not enough to know that all this happened nineteen hundred years ago; we long for his presence now. We forget that he is still at work. True, he walks no more in the world, he talks no more with the passers-by on the streets, but he talks to them and he talks to us by his Holy Spirit. And as he talks to us by his Spirit, he tells us that his deeds of healing, his words of love, his assurances of the Father's care, were only that men might know that God is at all times Physician and Friend and Father.

Since God is unchangeable, his promises are sure. He performs them every one. They are not outlawed by the lapse of time. God who made them sits in unchanging love and longing for his people. So we have no need to worry, as we do so often; no need to take the promises with a great deal of allowance. We are to plant our feet firmly upon them and we shall be safe.

How often we look at one of God's promises doubtfully, claim it very hesitatingly, get down as it were on hands and knees for fear it will fail us, when all the time that promise is as strong as the omnipotent God who made it and makes it to-day, as unchangeable

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as the Eternal who assures us, "Even to old age I am he, and even to hoar hairs will I carry you: I have made, and I will bear: yea, I will carry and I will deliver."

Then the thought of the unchangeableness of God is our encouragement to prayer, and constant prayer. We can go to God at all times, sure of a favorable reception at his hands. There is no need to wait for a favorable moment, as Esther was compelled to wait when she wished to go to her king. Her earthly lord was a creature like ourselves, subject to moods and tempers and fits of the blues, and she wished to remain away from him until she realized that he was having one of his good days. Frequently we find it advisable to observe the same precaution in our dealings with men. We have a favor to ask, but we do not ask it until we have tested our friend by a few moments of casual conversation; we want to know how he is feeling. Perhaps we have a business proposition to make, but we may have to postpone our work for days, while we wait for a favorable opportunity. We learn to be wise as serpents in our dealings with men, because they are as changeable as ourselves.

There is no need to wait for the sign that God is ready for us. It is only a fable which tells that the invalids of Jerusalem could not hope for relief in the pool of Bethesda until the moment it was troubled by an angel from heaven; it was only a man who held out the scepter to his queen in token that he would grant her petition instead of ordering her death. But it is the true God who calls us to him at all times. When we go to him in prayer of petition, we do not

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need continually to draw back, with the thought that we had better wait until another day; we have already asked as much as we think he will feel like giving us to-day! We cannot ask too much of him whom giving doth not impoverish nor withholding enrich. We cannot approach too often to him who said, "For I, Jehovah, change not."

To him we must cling in the midst of the changes and the disappointments, the griefs and the losses of life, as well as in the times of joy and gladness. For those who cling to God cannot be overwhelmed. They shall be safe. To him they can always pray, in faith and trust:

"O Thou who changest not,
Abide with me."

And he will hear the prayer and give his wonderful answer.

II

THE DIVINE PURSUIT

WE have heard so much of the sufferings of men who are pursued by misfortune of some kind that the word pursuit has come to have a most unpleasant sound in our ears.

It is a common thing to hear a man say, "I am pursued by bad luck. Nothing I do turns out well. Everything I touch is blasted."

It is human nature to think that it is only by the utmost good fortune men can escape the sorrows which are all about them; that misfortune is the only thing to be had without a struggle; that the pleasant things of life must be striven for with might and main, and only secured, if at all, from the grasping hand of an unwilling fate.

This idea that sorrow is pursuing men while they are continually in pursuit of blessing has left its impress on literature. Greek philosophers agreed that happiness must be pursued by man if he would obtain it. The fathers of the United States put in words the same idea when they said that the inalienable rights of men are "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness."

But long before the time of the signers of the Declaration of Independence, or the days of the ancient Greeks, King David of Israel gave expression to

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exactly the contrary feeling. He did not say that man is pursued by evil, while happiness eludes him, but that happiness is pursuing man: "Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me," he wrote, or, as a more exact translation gives the thought, "Only goodness and mercy shall pursue me." So his idea was that man is pursued by goodness and mercy, and by these only.

Then where does evil come in? The inference is unavoidable. If evil is not pursuing men, then men are pursuing evil, laying hold upon it, throwing themselves ever in the way of misfortune and trouble and anxiety.

What a reversal of all our conceptions of life! Goodness and mercy pursuing us, while we are doing all we can to escape them, while we run after sin and misery!

Of course all men realize that God is in pursuit of them. But so many fail to realize that by giving themselves unreservedly into his hands they insure for themselves blessing, their capture by goodness and mercy. Why do they persist in the idea that when God pursues them it is with a flaming sword in his hand, that there is safety only in flight, and that he follows them, turning when they turn, always at their heels, seeking to overthrow them?

God is pursuing men continually, but he is seeking to help them and make their lives a blessing. He is seeking to touch them, in order that he may impart to them the riches of his love. How the fugitives misunderstand him! There is no flaming sword in his hand. Goodness is there, and mercy. If only they would per-

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mit God to lay his hands upon them! But no! On they go, congratulating themselves on their ability to elude him.

Some there are who go through life thus, continually striving to elude God's blessing. To the portal of the tomb they go. Not once has God been permitted to bless them as he wishes. "Hands off!" they cry, and God has kept his hands off.

They have escaped him through life, if it can be called an escape to slip from the grasp of goodness and mercy, only at the end to come into the hands of a God who is then all justice, bearing indeed a sword of flaming fire. They have escaped from love, only to be captives forever in the chains of sin.

But the result of men's blindness is not always so sad. When man permits the hand of the pursuing God to touch him, how life brightens! Then indeed the goodness and mercy which have been following him are understood. After long periods of running from God's goodness, men do sometimes permit God to reach them with blessing, and then they have the Psalmist's vision of joy.

That vision of God's pursuing, beneficent providence enabled William McKinley, in the midst of suffering, in the hour of death, to murmur, "Nearer, my God, to thee."

It was that vision which enabled Garfield, on the day after Lincoln's assassination, to quiet the frenzied mob on Wall Street by shouting so that all could hear, "Fellow-countrymen, God reigns and the government at Washington still lives."

It is the same vision which leads God's people to-

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day to say, whatever the difficulty or the danger to which they are exposed :

“ Why art thou cast down, O my soul, and why art thou disquieted within me? ” “ Hope thou in God,” for “ only goodness and mercy shall pursue me all the days of my life.”

III

CONFIDENT WAITING FOR GOD

IN the course of God's loving dealings with us, there come times when, in order to give the joys he has prepared for us, he must lead us through experiences that seem trials.

Surely we can bear these trials for the sake of what we know is coming to us! Surely we can be content to wait in confident trust for the revelation of God's purpose!

But no! So often, in the moment of temporary trial and loss, we suffer our thoughts to turn away from God and rest upon the trials, upon self. Then the bitterness of our lot almost overwhelms us. We cry out that God has forgotten us; that the Saviour has left our side for the time; therefore these evils have come upon us.

But he has not gone. He is with us all the time. He hears our reproaches and complainings, and his heart is filled with sorrow, sorrow like that which came to him on the day when it was written of him, "Jesus wept." Sorrow, for we had promised to trust him!

A humble follower of the Master who suffered great anguish during a long illness was once asked how she endured such suffering. She replied, "They who look upon God's face never feel his hand."

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One trouble is that we look away from God's face. We fail to see the love there which would inspire our trust, and we think only of the hardness of our present lot.

It is as though the gold-seeker, traveling to the bonanza field of which he has heard brilliant tales, should become discouraged because of the hardships of the way. Only those whose minds are steadfastly fastened on the gold which they fondly hope will reward their efforts can calmly bear the sufferings of the journey, and can win through to the goal.

The seeker after gold is sustained in difficulty by a hope which ever eludes him: it is not one such adventurer in a hundred who is successful. But we who are Christians have set before us a reward that cannot escape our grasp; we are certain to secure it if we hold to the quest through all the trials and difficulties of the way. Why, then, can we not be as patient and confident as one whose hope is so often doomed to disappointment? God has said that all things work together for good to them that love him. Knowing this, why cannot we leave in his hands these passing troubles which worry us, looking ahead to the promised good as the traveler over a mountain range submits without a thought to the darkness and unpleasantness of the miles of snowsheds, because he knows that by means of these he will be enabled to pass the otherwise impassable barriers of snow? When the traveler reaches the summit, comes out into the air, and beholds the wonderful panorama of white-clad mountain peaks reaching into the clear blue of heaven, his confidence is justified; any passing discomfort of the journey is

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forgotten. So if we resolutely put aside the temptation to repine at sickness and losses, at misconceptions of our actions by our friends, the temporary closing in our faces of doors to usefulness, and all the things we cannot understand, we shall be ready always by reason of our complete trust in God to enter into the glory he is preparing for us by means of these very trials.

We need the trust of Job to say, "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him." We need trust in God like that which Sir Wemyss Reid, in his biography of Lyon Playfair, says Prince Albert of England had in the scientist, as shown on the occasion of a visit to the scientist's laboratory. "The prince and Playfair were standing near a caldron containing lead, which was boiling at white heat. 'Has your royal highness any faith in science?' asked Playfair. 'Certainly,' replied the prince. Playfair then washed the prince's hand with ammonia to get rid of any grease that might be on it. 'Will you now place your hand in this boiling metal and ladle out a portion of it?' he said to his distinguished pupil. 'Do you tell me to do this?' asked the prince. 'I do,' replied Playfair. The prince instantly put his hand into the caldron, and ladled out some of the boiling lead without sustaining any injury."

Should a man show more confidence in a human friend than in God? Yet we do precisely this, so often, in spite of all our declaration of undying trust in the love of God.

We need to learn that God is mighty, and that his might is for us; that God is love, and that his love is for us; that God knows the future, and that he has

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planned for us; that others may seek to harm us, but that God will hinder their plans; that when trials come to us in our service of God there will be greater joy and happiness at some time in the future than ever we could have known without these afflictions.

God's plan for us is being fulfilled; his purposes for us are being carried out, certainly and surely, and no one can hinder them, except as we ourselves step in the way and will not permit the working out of God's good pleasure for us.

When we clear the way of petty prejudice and mistrust, the good pleasure of God will be brought to pass. For "our present light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory."

Therefore, "trust ye in Jehovah forever, for in Jehovah is an everlasting rock." Remember that you are God's man, and say, with John Burroughs:

Serene, I fold my hands and wait,
Nor care for wind, or tide, or sea;
I rave no more 'gainst time or fate,
For lo! my own shall come to me.

I stay my haste, I make delays,
For what avails this eager pace?
I stand amid th' eternal ways,
And what is mine shall know my face.

Asleep, awake, by night or day,
The friends I seek are seeking me;
No wind can drive my bark astray,
Nor change the tide of destiny.

What matter if I stand alone?
I wait with joy the coming years;
My heart shall reap where it has sown,
And garner up the fruit of tears.

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The waters know their own and draw
The brook that springs in yonder heights;
So flows the good with equal law
Unto the soul of pure delights.

The stars come nightly to the sky,
The tidal wave comes to the sea;
Nor time, nor space, nor deep, nor high,
Can keep my own away from me.

IV

THE FAITH THAT PLEASES GOD

THERE are degrees of faith. There is the faith of him who believes in Christ just enough to throw himself on Christ for salvation. But he knows so little of the Master; he has not had time to learn. Yet Christ receives him, for he will not break the bruised reed nor quench the smoking flax. Christ bears with him, even when he shows that he is satisfied with bearing the name of Christian, with having entered the outer sanctuary of God's heart, where he is content to stay.

Then there is the faith of him who is never satisfied with what he knows, but is ever longing for more light, more revelation, further progress in the mysteries of the Christian life.

Both men have saving faith. But what a difference there is in their lives! A seventeenth-century writer has compared the faith of the man who is content with little to the voyage of a leaky, unseaworthy vessel. Buffeted by storms, its captain and crew have a hard time to keep afloat; but it reaches port at last. But the Christian whose faith is ever increasing is like the stanch and steady vessel which, though encountering the same storms, is able to ride them safely and securely, at cost of little vexation and delay, until it

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comes into the harbor with every sail set to the favoring wind.

A little faith is far better than none, but a growing faith is a necessity for the comfort of the Christian, and it is a necessity if we would please God. God is always pleased when he sees faith, but how much greater is his pleasure when he sees great faith!

When Peter started to walk to Christ upon the water, and began to sink, Christ called to him yearningly, "O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?" When the disciples sought to heal the demoniac boy, but could not for lack of faith, the Master looked lovingly and reprovingly upon them and exclaimed, "O faithless generation, how long shall I be with you?"

Thus two of Christ's infrequent reproofs to his disciples were called forth by little faith. It was natural, then, that one of the very few occasions when he marveled was when strong faith was disclosed in an unexpected quarter. A centurion wished him to heal his servant. But he felt unworthy that Christ should come under his roof, and he entreated him: "Speak the word only, and my servant shall live." And Christ was pleased, for he said, "I have not found such faith, no, not in Israel."

Christ was always pleased when he saw great faith, and when he saw desire for more faith. Surely he was gratified when the blind man cried: "Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief." And when the disciples prayed, "Increase our faith," he proceeded at once to show them what great things faith could accomplish.

God is pleased with a little faith. But it is worthy

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of notice and reflection that those whose names are placed in God's book of remembrance in the eleventh chapter of Hebrews as those who pleased him were men and women of strong and growing faith. There is no Saul there, and no Thomas; but the names of Enoch and Noah and Abraham, of Sarah and Isaac and Jacob, of Joseph and Moses and Rahab, tell us distinctly that a growing faith is necessary to him who would please God.

V

THE REWARD OF THE MAN WHO TRUSTS

TRUST in God brings blessings for the present. David said of God: "He is our help." Note that little word "is." How much it tells of the life of the writer! He believed God's Word, and accepted it. He understood that God was not only ready to help him, but that he was helping him. He had made trial of God in the past, had been brought to the knowledge of his power and ability to help his children, and now he was simply resting in the knowledge that he was with him. God was his help in difficulties, public and personal; his help in temptations; his help in suffering. "He is our help." This was a declaration like that made by Lincoln when he left Springfield for Washington after his election to the presidency: "I feel that I cannot succeed without the divine aid upon which at all times Washington relied. On him I place my reliance for support."

But David was also sure of receiving benefits for the future. In the same passage from which quotation has already been made he said: "Our heart shall rejoice in him." He knew that the future held for him nothing but joy—not transient joy, the joy of earthly existence, the joy which man tastes only to turn from

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it in disgust; but real joy, the joy of the heart, the joy of God himself. A heart rejoicing in the Lord is to be the possession, throughout an eternal future, of every man who trusts in God, because God will wait lovingly on those who trust him, and will give them joy in the knowledge and the possession of himself.

I doubt, however, if there was any such distinction between present and future blessings in the mind of David. For he had a vivid sense of God present with him. Having God he had all things, not only for the present, but for the future; not only for the future, but for the present. Eternal life was his present possession; the joy of the future would be but a continuation of his present joy. That experience will be understood by many Christians. They not only grasp the blessings of the present—these can be understood and appreciated by their friends—but they have so long brooded over the promise, “all things are yours,” and the personality and reliability of him who inspired those words, that already, by faith, they have laid hold upon the joys of the future and have them in the present.

Once I read the story of a poor Christian widow who had long looked forward to receiving a fortune which had been in litigation for many years. She had planned just what she would do with every dollar; it was all to go to the Church of Jesus Christ, for work at home and abroad. She was sure of her right to the fortune. Her lawyer had assured her it would be in her possession some day. She was as happy in planning the distribution of the funds as if they were actually in her hands. And when she died, without

having received the fortune, it was found that, by will, she had left it all to the work to which she had, in thought, given it while yet alive. That was, then, as much a real gift, so far as she was concerned, as it proved to be a few days after her death, when the case was settled and the money was turned over to the widow's church. She had simply grasped in the present what she felt assured was to come to her in the future.

So it was with the patriarch Jacob. He received a promise from God that the land in which he dwelt was to belong to his seed after him. This promise was so many times repeated, and he dwelt on the thought of it so often, that he looked upon the land as already his, though many tribes of enemies occupied it. And when he lay on his deathbed in Egypt, far from the promised inheritance, he felt that it was his to dispose of as he would—a present possession, because a promised possession. With magnificent faith he called his sons and gave them his blessing, and to each man a portion in that land of promise. It has been pointed out that the reality of his belief in his present possession was shown when, pausing in the midst of his legacy-giving, he lifted his eyes to heaven and cried, “I have waited for thy salvation, O Lord,” as though singing in his gratitude to God, “Thou didst promise; now thou hast fulfilled thy promise; the promised blessing is at hand.” By long communion with God, he had grasped the promises so securely that the mark between present and future had entirely disappeared. For him all was present joy, because of present faith.

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Are we learning how trust in God enriches life here and now with all the promised joys of God, enabling us, while we are still toiling upon the earth, to grasp hands with the glorified saints, and to share the happiness they know?

TWO

THE REALITY OF GOD'S GUIDANCE

The clouds hang heavy 'round my way,
I cannot see;
But through the darkness I believe
God leadeth me.
'Tis sweet to keep my hand in his
While all is dim;
To close my weary, aching eyes,
And follow him.
Through many a thorny path he leads
My tired feet;
Through many a path of tears I go,
But it is sweet
To know that he is close to me,
My God, my Guide.
He leadeth me, and so I walk
Quite satisfied.
To my blind eyes he may reveal
No light at all:
But while I lean on his strong arm
I cannot fall.

—HENRY ALFORD.

VI

FOLLOWING GOD'S LEADING

THOUSANDS of years ago, the promise was given to those who loved God that they should be directed day by day in such a way that their lives would be useful and happy. The promise was very specific. "And thou shalt hear a voice behind thee saying, This is the way, walk ye in it, when thou turnest to the right hand or when thou turnest to the left."

Of course there were those who did not believe the promise; they tried to guide themselves. But there were many who did believe; every day they gave themselves up to God for his guidance, so that they were able to make their own the language of the Psalm, "The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want. . . . He leadeth me beside the still waters. . . . He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake." To them the promise was given by Jesus that he would send his Spirit into their hearts, that he might guide them into all truth.

How is the promise fulfilled? This is a mystery to those who will not give themselves up to God's guidance; but to those who do yield themselves it becomes very plain that God guides those who put themselves in his hands and seek to coöperate with him by doing the very best they can for themselves.

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We are foolish when we think we can guide ourselves through the mazes of life. Our vision is imperfect, our judgment is immature, we can see such a small part of our surroundings and cannot properly interpret these. Our need is for One whose vision and judgment are perfect, who knows our circumstances and the circumstances of others, that we may ask him to guide us.

To frightened passengers on an ocean steamer who feared because they saw only the fog about them, the chief mate said: "You need not be the least uneasy. The fog extends only to a certain height above the water, and the captain is at the masthead, up above the fog, and it is he who is directing the vessel!"

There is no reason to be uneasy when we put ourselves in the hands of him who sees above and beyond the fogs and clouds of life. He knows the way we take and he will make plain our pathway before us.

God's guidance is given to those who read his word, who pray to him, not merely once a day, but who are always in communion with him. The way may never seem to be made plain very far ahead, but God makes it plain sufficiently far ahead to enable his people to plant their steps firmly and confidently. When they need it, more light will be given.

Christians often rebel as God shows them the way they are to take. They think their own way would be better, but it is only as they yield their judgment to God's loving wisdom that their lives become filled with peace and joy.

The lesson is taught by George MacDonald:

FOLLOWING GOD'S LEADING

I said, "Let me walk in the field,"
He said, "Nay, walk in the town."
I said, "There are no flowers there,"
He said, "No flowers, but a crown."

I said, "But the skies are black,
There is nothing but noise and din;"
But he wept as he sent me back,
"There is more," he said, "there is sin."

I said, "I shall miss the light,
And friends will miss me, they say;"
He answered me, "Choose to-night,
If I am to miss you, or they."

I pleaded for time to be given;
He said, "Is it hard to decide?
It will not seem hard in heaven
To have followed the steps of your Guide."

Then into his hand went mine,
And into my heart came he;
And I walked in a light divine,
The path I had feared to see.

VII

WHEN GOD IS GUIDE

THREE is a marvelous record in a wonderful Book that tells of two men, each of whom was making a journey. They did not know each other, and they were not planning to go in the same direction. One of the men was troubled and anxious; he had been reading a book which he did not understand. The second man knew something that would help him.

But what good was his knowledge to the anxious man until they were brought together? And how was the one to find the other?

There was just one way, for there was One only who had access to both men. God wanted them to meet, for he knew the one man's need, and the other man's longing to be of use. So he guided the reader till the reader came close to the man who knew, and he guided the steps of the man who knew till he saw the reader. Acts 8: 26-40 tells what followed.

Two chapters further on, the same Book tells of two other men who were brought together in a manner equally marvelous. One of them was an officer in the Roman army. One night he was praying. We are not told the subject of his prayer, but we can guess. He must have asked to be taught how to serve God better, for when he was praying God told him to seek a certain Jew, as much as to say, "He is the man

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to help you." Now the centurion did not know the Jew, and he well might have been reluctant to send for him, for he knew a Jew would not be apt to listen to a communication from a Gentile. Yet God had told him what to do, so he did as he was told.

Now the Jew, too, was a man of prayer. The day after the prayer of the centurion, which led him to send for the Jew, the Jew was praying. We are not told the subject of his prayer, either, but, if we are to judge from the answer, he must have been seeking guidance in his work for God. God told him to follow the men who were even then seeking for him, the centurion's men, who were near at hand, obeying their master's orders.

The Jew obeyed the message, as the centurion had obeyed the day before, and thus God brought together these two men who were to help each other, and were to be a blessing to the world.

"How fine it would be to have my wants supplied in such an unmistakable fashion!" the reader of these stories says. "But I must not expect such a thing to happen to-day!"

Why not? Such things do happen to-day, for God is the same to-day as in the days of the desert reader and the traveling Jew; as in the days of the eager centurion and the praying Simon Peter.

In a busy Atlantic Coast city there was a pastor for whom the onerous demands of the Sunday school and the church were proving too heavy. If the work was to be done properly, he knew he must have assistance. But where was assistance to come from? Already the members of the church were carrying heavy

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burdens, and the pastor could not ask them to assume the expense of an assistant. He thought, he prayed, he tried in every way of which he could think to supply his own need, but in vain. Just then came an insistent call to attend a district meeting of ministers. At first he thought he could not go; the cost would be more than he felt able to pay, the journey would be long and arduous, and home work was crowding more than ever. Yet as he prayed for guidance he was sure he ought to attend that meeting.

Hundreds of miles away was another minister who had resigned his church in a distant state for reasons of health. At last the way was open to resume work, but he did not wish a field where he would work for salary. God had given him income sufficient for his needs, and he was eager to work where he was needed, without a cent of pay. He had asked God to guide him to work. To him, also, came the notice to attend the meeting. Because the journey would be difficult he was on the point of remaining at home, but when he prayed for guidance, he felt he must attend the meeting.

At the meeting the two men were brought face to face, though as strangers. The pastor who needed assistance told the assembled ministers of the great openings in his field, and the impossibility of taking advantage of them. The minister who sought work listened, and knew that his prayer was answered. Immediately on returning home, he wrote to the overworked pastor, offering his services, without cost. Inquiries were made of those to whom he referred, and these were satisfactorily answered. Within two months after the

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district meeting he was settled as associate pastor in the needy field. The prayers of both men were answered. God had guided their steps.

This is not an isolated instance; it is merely one of thousands and tens of thousands that are told daily by those who talk to one another of God's marvelous works. Never does God forget his people. Always he looks out for their welfare, planning for them, seeking to give them his very best, eager to have them come to him and put themselves in his hands, that blessing may be theirs.

And all he asks of those to whom he wants to give such wonderful blessings is trust. But he wants such absolute trust that we will always be ready to do his bidding without question.

VIII

DOES GOD GUIDE TO-DAY?

A N earnest Christian who had known difficulty and trial all through his long life was once asked if he believed in God's guidance. This was his reply:

"Nothing is truer or surer to me than that God has shown me, through all my days, the way in which I should walk. It has not always been the way in which I wished to walk. Ofttimes he has led me in bitter and painful ways. But now, looking back, I see that he has always shown me the right path. When I have not had my own way, it would have meant disaster if I had. I have not always followed sweetly or cheerfully, nor have I in every case accepted my disappointments with love. But to-day I thank God for every step, for every thwarting of my own will.

"And I want to say to you that you may absolutely, unquestioningly, and without fear let God show you the way, even though he should lead you through shattered hopes and through pain and tears. Some of you have found God's way very strange and mysterious, but you need not be afraid. You sometimes ask, 'Lord, can this be thy way?' The answer is, 'Yes, my way of wisdom, of love, of goodness, the way to the best things, to glory, to joy, and peace.'

"Never doubt that God will lead if you will only take his way. The truest thing in all my life is the

DOES GOD GUIDE TO-DAY?

companionship of Christ. He is with me in the smallest ways. He orders my steps. He decides for me in the simplest perplexities. He shows me the way in everything. If I were never to speak to you again, I would say that you may make this the prayer of your heart every moment, in every experience: 'Cause me to know the way wherein I should walk,' and his guidance will never be wanting, and will never be mistaken."

Does God guide his people to-day? Try him, and see.

IX

BEFORE AND AFTER

A CHRISTIAN man who was passing through a period of trial and uncertainty was listening to selections played on a neighbor's graphophone. At first he was politely attentive. Soon, however, his perplexing problems reasserted themselves, and he became unmindful of what was going on. His head drooped, his eyes had a far-away expression, and there was a look of care on his face. Noting his absorption, and understanding the reason for it, the sympathetic friend who was selecting the records chose the next with the prayer that it would reach his heart.

As the first notes of "O Rest in the Lord" sounded, the man seemed to pay no attention. Soon, however, he looked up as if startled. In a moment he was listening intently, eagerly. The strained look left his face, and he sat back comfortably in his chair. When the song ended, he gave a happy sigh and said gratefully:

"Oh, but that was good! That is what I need to do. I must just 'rest in the Lord; ' I must 'wait patiently for him.' I know I have no right to doubt him. It is all going to come out right; I know it will."

Less than three months from that time he was rejoicing in some of the very disappointments that had paved the way for the great blessings God was then revealing to him.

BEFORE AND AFTER

In the story of his life Henry Bessemer has told of a series of disappointments which proved to be blessings in disguise. He had devised a stamp to be sold by the English government for use on documents, which could not be counterfeited. On learning that the government was suffering a great loss each year through the misuse of document stamps, he went to the Stamp Officer with his device. The chief, much impressed, offered him a position in the office at a good salary, in return for the assignment of full rights to his invention. He was filled with joy, for the salary would enable him to marry at once. His joy was short-lived, however, for a far simpler method than his own for protecting the stamps came to the attention of the Stamp Officer, and the offer was withdrawn.

It is not strange that this sudden change in the prospects of the young inventor caused temporary depression. But he went to work bravely, and soon he realized that the disappointment was a blessing in disguise. Instead of burying his talents in a government office, he devoted himself to other inventions which earned for him fame and fortune, and brought great blessing to the world.

Not many years ago the mother of an American writer of some note became an invalid, requiring constant care. With a sigh the daughter gave up her plans for literary work and devoted herself to the invalid. Day after day she wheeled her mother to the fields and the woods. Many times she thought of her neglected work, but soon she was so busy investigating moths and butterflies for the edification of her mother

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that she forgot her disappointment. In a few years she had gathered so much information about the insects that she was able to write a book that was received at once by scientists as an authority, and when she could resume her interrupted literary work the reputation gained through the volume proved of great assistance to her.

A busy pastor was laid aside by reason of a nervous breakdown and was ordered by his physician to take months of absolute rest. For a time he was disconsolate, but finally he made up his mind to go to Texas and live in the open air. One day his attention was attracted by some ants in his path. He became absorbed in them. For months he continued the investigations begun that day, and when the enforced vacation was over he had regained his health, he had laid the foundation for experimental knowledge of ants and spiders that secured for him recognition as the world's greatest authority on certain phases of insect life, and he had a hobby that saved him from further breakdown; his usefulness in his chosen calling was thus greatly prolonged.

It is a simple matter to note after the event how so many blessings have their root in what seemed disaster, disappointment, or hardship. Only the man of faith is able to see the coming blessing while he is still in the midst of trial. Only the Christian who has learned the Psalmist's meaning when he said, "Commit thy way unto the Lord, trust also in him, and he shall bring it to pass," can assure himself that it is God's way to bring blessing out of disaster, joy out of disappointment, peace out of trial.

X

LINKS IN THE CHAIN

IN 1835 the American Baptists opened a mission in India. Rev. and Mrs. Samuel S. Day were the first missionaries. For eleven years they labored at Madras and Nellore. Results were meager. But they waited in faith, prayed day by day, and proved their faith by their work. In 1846, when the failure of Mr. Day's health compelled them to return home, there were but seven members on the field, and only two of these were Telugus.

The story of the Telugu Mission by John E. Clough¹ tells what followed:

"After two years in America, with health restored, Mr. Day asked to be sent back to India. Rev. Lyman Jewett was under appointment and was to go with him. At the annual meeting [of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions] of 1848 the question was raised why this feeble mission should be continued. Should not these two men be sent to some other more promising field? Mr. Day pleaded for the life of his mission. He knew that his flock was scattered. Nevertheless, he begged to be sent back. One of the great men of the denomination came forward and helped him. Dr. William R. Williams brought in a report for the committee to which this

¹ "Social Christianity in the Orient."

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question had been referred. It had for its keynote, 'Destroy it not, for a blessing is in it.' He was one of the first to strike the prophetic note on behalf of the Telugu mission which afterwards became characteristic."

Together Mr. Day and Mr. Jewett labored in faith, year after year. Results were meager. Still there was no thought of giving up. They wanted to continue work at Nellore, and they looked forward to occupying Ongole, which Mr. Day felt sure would some day be the great center of the mission. Yet they knew well that the absence of definite results would endanger the continuance of the station they were occupying. "Often the Jewetts heard Mr. Day in the solitude of his own room praying aloud for the Telugu Mission, and sometimes words ceased and there were groans as if he were in a travail of soul."

Five years more passed. Once more Mr. Day's health failed, and he returned to America. He never saw the field again. But he continued to see by faith the results he knew were coming. And Mr. Jewett continued the work in faith.

A few months after Mr. Day's departure word came to Mr. Jewett that a decision was about to be made to sell the bungalow, give up the mission, and remove him to Burmah. A friend who wrote to him of this asked him, "If the society gives up the mission, what field will you occupy?" The reply of the faith-filled man was inspiring: "Then Lyman Jewett will stay and work by himself with the Telugus."

A deputation was sent from America to Nellore. They formed an unfavorable opinion, and let it be

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known that they were ready to report that the field should be abandoned. At the annual meeting of the Missionary Society in Albany in 1853, the report of the deputation was received, and abandonment seemed certain.

Finally Dr. Edward Bright rose and "described how the little group of Christian members at Nellore would feel when they learned that American Baptists had abandoned them." He was the one who would have to write the letter to them, he declared. He said it was a task that he did not care to face. He walked up and down the platform repeating despairingly the question again and again, "And who shall write the letter?"

"A large map of Baptist missions was hanging over the pulpit," Mr. Clough said, in telling the story of the meeting. "On one side of the Bay of Bengal was a thick cluster of stars, representing mission stations in Burmah. On the other side was just one star, indicating the Nellore station in the Telugu country. Some one in the heat of argument pointed to it and called it a 'Lone Star.' There was one man in that audience who was touched by the expression 'Lone Star,' Dr. S. F. Smith, the author of 'My Country, 'tis of Thee.' Next morning at his breakfast table Judge Ira Harris asked Dr. Smith's opinion about the question to be decided at the meeting of that morning. Dr. Smith took a slip of paper out of his pocket, on which he had written a poem overnight, and said, 'You have it here.' "

At the meeting that morning the poem was read with telling effect:

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Shine on, ‘Lone Star!’ Thy radiance bright
Shall spread o'er all the eastern sky.
Morn breaks apace from gloom and night;
Shine on, and bless the pilgrim’s sight. . . .

Shine on, ‘Lone Star!’ The day draws near
When none shall shine more fair than thou;
Thou, born and nursed in doubt and fear,
Wilt glimmer on Immanuel’s brow.

When the reading of the poem was completed, it was apparent to all that the Telugu Mission was saved.

To Dr. Jewett in India went a copy of the poem. He carried it about with him and read it frequently. “It was an anchor to his faith.”

A few months after hearing of the Albany meeting he went with his wife and children to Ongole. “There were some low hills close to Ongole. They decided to go up on one of those hilltops to pray, early the first morning of the new year, 1854. . . . They sang together, they prayed together, one after another. Dr. Jewett stood up and looked over the plain before him, dotted with villages, perhaps fifty of them in full sight, in the radiance of the dawn. He said, ‘As the sun is now about to rise and shine upon the earth, so may the Sun of Righteousness arise quickly and shine upon this dark land.’ He pointed to a piece of land, all overgrown with cactus, and asked, ‘Would you not like that spot for our mission bungalow, and all this land to become Christian? Well, that day will come.’ ”

But where was the man whom God would send to the station? He wondered, but as he wondered he quieted himself, for he knew the man would come in God’s good time.

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Six years more passed. Still there were no visible results of Dr. Jewett's work. At the Baptist Anniversaries in 1862 a majority felt that abundant time had been given the Telugu Mission to show results. The vote was about to be taken which would mean the death of the work, when Dr. Warren, secretary of the Missionary Society, rose and exclaimed, "Wait, brethren, wait! You know not what you are doing. Wait; let us hear what Brother Jewett, who is now on his journey home, has to say on this subject."

When Dr. Jewett arrived he was called before the executive committee of the society. "They proposed to him the relinquishment of the Telugu Mission. They found him immovable. His faith told him, 'God has much people among the Telugus.' He had labored among them for fourteen years, and declined to be transplanted to some other field. He meant to live, and if need be, to die, among the Telugus. It is said that Dr. Warren smiled then and answered, 'Well, brother, if you are resolved to return, we must send some one with you to bury you.'"

And now for the man whom God was preparing for Ongole.

Less than one year after the beginning of Mr. Day's work in India, John E. Clough was born on a farm in Chautauqua County, New York. The family physician said, as he looked upon him in his cradle, "One continent will be too small to hold that boy."

A few years later the boy's father moved to Iowa, and John had the experience of a pioneer's son. Later

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he toiled as a surveyor, and felt that perhaps he had found his life work.

In 1853, the year of the Albany meeting, when the fate of the Telugu Mission was in the balance, he determined to go to school. He worked for his board at the town hotel, and was frequently left in charge of the guests. He studied hard, determined to learn what would make him a better surveyor. Sometimes he thought that he might become a lawyer.

In 1857 he entered Burlington University, Iowa. He knew that the school had a theological department, but this did not trouble him: he proposed to give the department a wide berth; he had no use for ministers or missionaries.

He was assigned to the room of A. D. McMichael, a Christian man, who on the first evening asked him to join in Bible reading and prayer. "I told him frankly that I was a skeptic, but if such was his habit to go right on, and added, 'I guess I can stand it if you can.'" Mr. Clough wrote, when he was an old man, "With half an ear I heard my room-mate read his chapter and mention my name in prayer night after night. I felt quite free to say to him that I had no use for this sort of thing."

Not many weeks passed before the Christian atmosphere influenced him. "McMichael was steadfastly continuing his habit of reading his Bible and praying at night before retiring. I knew that other men, teachers and students, whom I was learning to love and esteem more every day, were doing just as McMichael was doing. When trying to study while he was praying I began to feel as if I was showing

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disrespect to them all. I had to yield to the pressure. . . . In the First Baptist Church of Burlington I was baptized February 11, 1858."

Friends tried to convince him that he was called to be a minister, but he was reluctant to decide as they wished—in part, perhaps, because as a student for the ministry he would receive partial support. He dared not think of the aid given to students preparing for the ministry: the thought might prove too great a temptation to him during those days of great financial strain when he found it hard to make ends meet.

Before his graduation, he decided that he ought to become a missionary, but he reconsidered his decision. He was married, and he needed to support his wife. So, when a school was offered to him, he promised to teach. Soon he became a man of influence in the community. At length he thought he saw a chance to advance himself by political methods. While serving as delegate at his county convention, he succeeded in persuading the politicians to nominate men whom he named for several offices. Finally he thought he would ask to be made county surveyor. Most unaccountably the convention turned against him, and named another.

Ten years later he learned from a Christian man who had been present in the convention the explanation of his failure. "He saw how I controlled it, compelling the men to do as I advocated," Mr. Clough explains. "My career in Burlington was known to him; he recognized the temptation that lay in my capacity for a political career and feared that I would

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be lost to the ministry. Therefore, as he sat there unobserved, he prayed with all his might for my defeat. When the tide turned against me, he went home and gave thanks to God."

Still uncertain as to his call to be a missionary, Mr. Clough worked for some time as a colporteur for the American Baptist Publication Society. While in this work he heard Dr. Dean, a missionary in Siam, appeal for an associate to return with him to the field. After much self-examination, he decided to offer himself for the position.

But when, on August 2, 1864, he met the committee of the Missionary Society, and was asked if he felt drawn to any special country, he answered that he was ready to go wherever he was needed most. Accordingly he was told that he was to go with Dr. Jewett to the Telugu Mission.

At once he became convinced of the reality of his call, and he was so filled with longing to go with Dr. Jewett that when one of the committee said to him, "Suppose, in view of the financial depression, we should have to decide not to send you to the Telugu, what would you do?" "I should have to find some other way of getting there," was the reply.

In 1865 he began work in Nellore. Contact with Dr. Jewett filled him with longing for the day of the coming of the multitudes of converts to the mission. He knew they would come. Soon it was said in the mission that "Clough talked wild." He prayed for one hundred converts in 1866. For a time it seemed as if the prayer was not answered. Yet it was not long before the baptism of a man who, during thirty

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years, led more than one thousand people to accept Christ.

Then came the day when word was brought to Nellore of a group of people in a village near Ongole who somehow had learned of Christ and wanted a teacher. It was decided that the time had come to occupy Ongole, the town where the prayer meeting on the hill had been held in 1854, when Mr. Clough was attending the high school in Iowa.

Soon it became evident that the men of faith who had prayed for the success of the work among the Telugus were to have their reward, and that it was to come through the efforts of the man of faith whom God had been preparing for leadership in the great task.

Slowly at first, then more rapidly, the people were reached. They came at first by tens, then by hundreds, then by thousands. Mr. Clough was their guide, their shepherd, their helper always. He cared for hundreds who came to the mission compound for instruction; his experience in the country hotel in Iowa had fitted him for the task of entertainment. He opened schools for the children; his experience as a teacher enabled him to do this work wisely. In the time of the great famine, he acted as surveyor in charge of a three and one-half mile section of a canal built by the government, in order that work might be furnished to the starving; the knowledge of surveying gained when he was a struggling youth in the West was just what he needed then. Even his political experience was helpful, for frequently he had to handle multitudes in the most careful manner.

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In 1878 the vision of the man of faith became actual. Multitudes clamored to come to Christ and would not be denied. On July 2, 614 were baptized; next day the number was 2,222; on July 4, 700 more were baptized—3,536 in three days. Nearly 9,000 came to Christ in less than six weeks. In 1879 the church had 15,000 members, and it became evident that steps must be taken to organize a group of smaller churches where the people could be trained for effective work.

In 1881 Dr. Smith, whose poem had saved the Telugu Mission in 1853, visited Ongole. His heart was full as he saw what God had wrought through men of faith. When he reached home he wrote these words of triumph:

“Shine on! We learn to pray and wait
To toil and trust, through thee,—
A star of triumph on Christ’s brow,
And faith’s high victory.”

THREE
FIRST LESSONS

To Him, from wanderings long and wild
I come, an over-wearied child,
In cool and shade his face to find,
Assured that all I know is best,
And humbly trusting for the rest.

—JOHN G. WHITTIER.

XI

WHEN DANGER THREATENED HER CHILD

IN one of her books Mrs. Hannah Whitall Smith said that when her son was about eight years old a grave danger threatened him, and she could do absolutely nothing but trust in God. This is the story as she wrote it:

"A very wicked man, whom we had been obliged to thwart in some of his wicked purposes in reference to a child in an institution of which we were at the time manager, wrote us a most abusive and threatening letter. In it he declared his intention of taking his revenge on us through our son, by leading him into wickedness and making him as bad as himself. As I read the letter, my heart sank within me. I thought of the thousand ways in which such a threat could be fulfilled, and how powerless we were to prevent it. I was afraid to have my boy out of my sight for a moment, and felt as if we would have to move out of Philadelphia, away to the ends of the earth, anywhere to get out of the reach of this wicked man. But then I realized that even this might not be effectual, and in my despair I fled to the Lord for help. At once there came to me, as a voice from heaven, that blessed promise—'The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them,' with the

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assurance that so would the angels encamp around our boy and deliver him from this and every danger. My heart leaped up in happy confidence, as I gave him at once into this blessed guardianship; every fear vanished, and as I saw him leave the house for school the next morning, I could almost see the cohorts of angels surrounding him on every side. I believe I never again feared any danger for him, so sure was I that the Lord was his defense and his shield on every hand. Who can doubt that God did then and there, according to his word, take the charge of the child thus committed to him in an especial manner, and that from henceforth he encamped round about him continually, leading him safely through all the dangers of life, and landing him now at last unharmed in his heavenly home?"

XII

BELIEF THAT COUNTS

ONCE Dr. J. Wilbur Chapman was asked what he meant by faith. He replied by saying, "At the foot of the mountains, on the Pacific Coast, there are very strange and very interesting gullies. One can go for miles inland in narrow, canal-like creeks, great fissures in the mountains, into which waves of the Pacific wind for miles, right into the heart of the country. As the steamer goes into the narrow creek, there seems right ahead a rock. Yet there is no swerving of the engine; it seems to some of the passengers as if the vessel must go to pieces on some rocky crag. But there are some passengers who are unconcerned. They see the captain on the bridge, untroubled, though he is driving the vessel straight toward the cliff, and they feel sure that all is well. He must have been that way before, and he knows that all is well. Their faith in him is justified, for suddenly the crag splits, and a waterway is disclosed which leads into the heart of the mountain."

It is like that in life. People have their times of distress and dismay, when they feel that all is going wrong, and that there is no possible escape for them. Then suddenly the way is disclosed; they are at peace, and they wonder at their dismay. Faith enables them to trust that all will be well, while they are doing their

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best. That trust is reasonable, provided it is trust in God, who is all-powerful to keep his people in time of need.

Some one has told of two children who were standing by the window, watching the hunter's moon come up in all her wonderful splendor. "Sister, I see God right through that moon," said the boy. The little sister was a practical maiden, and exclaimed in horror, "Why, you know you can't. That's a wrong story; you know it is." Poor little brother was shocked, too, for a bit. He rallied himself, however, to ask in a pitying tone, "Sister, can't you see anything except with your eyes?" "No, I can't, and you can't either. You know you can't." There is where the difficulty lies. So many can't see anything "except with their eyes," and in their limited vision try to impose the conditions of their poverty upon those about them.

Whittier impressed that lesson when he wrote:

Soon or late to all our dwellings come the spectres of the mind,
Doubts and fears and dread forebodings in the darkness undefined;
Round us throng the grim projections of the heart and of
the brain,
And our pride of strength is weakness, and the cunning hand
is vain.

In the dark we cry like children; and no answer from on high
Breaks the crystal spheres of silence, and no white wings downward fly.
But the heavenly help we pray for comes to faith and not
to sight,
And our prayers themselves drive backward all the spirits of
the night.

XIII

THE SECRET OF SERENITY

DR. FRANCIS L. PATTON has said: "When the elevated railroad was first started in New York, the people were a little timid about riding on it, so the proprietors of the road took great pleasure in notifying the public of the fact that this road had been subjected to a most abnormal and enormous tonnage, and that consequently people of ordinary weight might deem themselves quite safe in traveling over that road. I feel the same way about the Christ, that I can take my way to heaven above the din and dust of daily life, because this elevated road has had all the world upon it for twenty centuries, and has given no sign of instability."

That is the secret of serenity: complete faith and trust in God, the faith and trust that know that all is well because God is God and God is good, and he is the good God of those who trust in him.

Mrs. Margaret E. Sangster once told of one of her friends who bore up under a great trial with such sweet serenity that her friends marveled:

"She told me that day, as we talked by the fire, how she had gone by herself when her peril was first made known to her, and had decided that it was not just then needful to lay another burden of pain on the heart of

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her mother. She had kept to herself, at first, all that the physician had told her, and in communion with her Saviour had found strength, wisdom, and patience. Later it had been her duty to let her knowledge be shared by others, her home people and a few intimate friends; but she had spoken of it so lightly and accepted it so bravely that she had lulled to rest their anxiety on her behalf. ‘I know,’ she said to me that afternoon, ‘that this life of mine must be short, and that the end may come suddenly at any time. Often when I lie down at night I wonder whether the wakening will be here or yonder, and in the morning when I open my eyes and see the familiar room, I am glad to stay a little longer with those I love. I have made it a rule to spend the first half hour of each day with the Master in prayer for one and another, and among the names I often mention to him are those who are carrying the heaviest load of care or whom I love most dearly.’”

This serenity comes to all those who learn to talk to God and listen to hear his messages given to them as they read the Bible; and this serenity cannot be disturbed for long by any circumstance unless they forget these things. It is with them as it was with the woman of whom George MacDonald wrote in one of his novels. A friend was trying to show her that her faith was not well grounded, as he said:

“But if you had sons at sea, it would not be of much good to you to feel safe yourself so long as they were in danger.”

“Oh, yes, it be, sir. What’s the good of feeling safe yourself, but it let you know other people be safe,

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too? It's when you don't feel safe yourself that you feel other people ben't safe."

"But some of your sons were drowned, for all that you say about safety."

"Well, sir," she answered with a sigh, "I trust they are none the less safe for that. It would be a strange thing for an old woman like me to suppose that safety lay in not being drowned. . . . What is the bottom of the sea, sir?"

"The hollow of his hand," I said, and said no more.

Spurgeon thus put the truth in homely phrase:

"When troubles come it is no use to fly in the face of God by hard thoughts of Providence—that is, kicking against the pricks and hurting your feet. The trees bow in the wind, and so must we. Every time the sheep bleats it loses a mouthful; and every time we complain we miss a blessing. Grumbling is a bad trade and yields no profit; but patience has a golden hand. Our evils will soon be over. After rain comes clear shining; black crows have wings; every winter turns to spring; every night breaks into morning. If one door be shut, God will open another; if the peas do not yield well, the beans may; yon hen leaves her eggs, another will bring out all her brood; there is a bright side to all things and a good God everywhere. Somewhere or other in the worst flood of trouble there always is a dry spot for contentment to get its foot on, and if there were not, it would learn to swim."

XIV

FROM MOHAMMED TO CHRIST

IN the fall of 1910 the Superintendent of the Nile Mission Press, in Egypt, was praying that God would send him a converted Moslem who would act as his literary helper.

Early in 1911 the prayer was answered in the coming of an Arab sheik whose remarkable story has been told by Arthur T. Upson,¹ the man who made the prayer.

The sheik was the son of a well-to-do man, and was born on the island of Aradu. He was given every opportunity to receive a thorough education in accordance with the customs of his people. But, being an independent thinker, he was not content to receive without inquiry and investigation the tenets of the Mohammedan religion as these were made known to him. Being dissatisfied with the dogmas to which his people had been accustomed, he turned from them and began to make investigation elsewhere. One day he heard a street preacher in Beirut give the invitation to those that are heavy laden to come to Christ.

Fearing that the sheik would become a Christian, his father pleaded with him to be faithful to the teachings of the Koran. A company of sheiks visited him at his home and searched the box in which he kept his

¹ In "The Missionary Review of the World."

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books. One of them was a Bible, which was taken. The covers were torn off, it was soaked in paraffin, and then burned.

To his sorrow, the young man yielded to the threats of those who declared that unless he denied his Christianity he would not be allowed to see his father and his friends.

For a long time he wavered between the two religions. Often he made the prayer :

“ Oh, God, I turn to thee from error. I wash myself in the blood of the Redeemer, and I know that thou dost receive my repentance. Establish the faith in my heart and make it grow. Sanctify it, that it may be a dwelling place for thee, and graciously guide the wandering lambs to the right fold of thy holiness. Lead my brother Moslems to the right path. Amen.”

The day came when he surrendered finally to God. From a friend he secured another copy of the Scriptures. Fearing that he would not be permitted to worship God in his own land, he asked a Greek priest to baptize him, purposing to leave at once for a safe haven. But his plans were interrupted by his arrest, on the charge that he had become a Christian.

As the police led him through the streets, a fanatical mob cried out for his blood, but he was not disturbed. He says :

“ I waited a moment to ask power from God, and courage. At that moment my sadness was changed into joy, my depression into gladness, and my weakness into strength. . . . All the way I was praising God for the tranquillity he was giving me.”

Word of the arrest was sent to Constantinople, and

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Sultan Abdul-Hamid ordered that he be sent back to his native town, and not be allowed to leave without permission.

At home, he was confined closely to his father's house. His Bible was destroyed. He became so weak that a physician was sent for. To him, a Christian, the plea was made for a Bible, and this was brought to him.

After some months the writing of a poem in praise of an official who stood high in favor with the Sultan brought about his release. Going to Damascus, he joined the Young Turks, his purpose being to secure religious liberty for himself and others like himself. But he soon found that his political associations reacted unfavorably on his Christian life, and he regretted the step he had taken.

After a year or two he went to Latakia, where his wife and son followed him. There he opened a primary school. He was at Latakia when the political trouble culminated in the deposition of Sultan Abdul-Hamid and the accession of Sultan Mohammed the Fifth.

Christians were in special danger during this time of uprising and change. The sheik learned of one plot against them and earned the gratitude of the Bishop of the Orthodox Greeks by warning him of the danger of his people. Then he was able to call on the ambassadors of the various European Powers for aid, and the danger was averted.

But the enemies of the sheik determined to punish him. They made false accusations against him, and succeeded in having him arrested. The officers

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came for him at the dinner hour in the school of which he was the teacher. He was not informed of the charge against him, but was dragged away from his wife and his son.

While he was detained under guard, a man whom the sheik described as one of the consuls sought him and told him he would lead him out of the room, as a reward for the information given to the Bishop of the intention of the mob to kill the Christians. But the sheik refused to permit the consul to lead him to safety, as he felt that his conductor's life would be in serious danger. "I will rather be killed myself," he said, "than that a drop of innocent blood should be shed. I have surrendered my case to the justice of God. Let his will be done."

That evening he was handcuffed and taken to a steamer, to be carried to Beirut. On the steamer the consul appeared and helped him secure from the pocket of the drunken policeman who accompanied him the letter to the Sultan, in which the accusation was made that he was the one who had incited the attack on the Christians which had failed by reason of his own information to the Bishop!

"As soon as I read this letter," the sheik said, in telling the story of his life, "and understood from its contents that it was pure fabrication, and having trusted in God who cares for his people, having regard for his omniscience and his answer to prayer, I knelt before God to answer my prayer that he would make my case clear to those in authority."

He was urged to escape from the vessel at a European port, as the charge against him was serious, but

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he insisted that the case "was a simple one by the help of God."

At Beirut he made a friend of the magistrate, who was convinced of his innocence. Regretfully the magistrate said he could not release him, as he wished to do, for word had already been sent of the prisoner's coming to Constantinople.

In speaking of the kindness shown him by this man, the sheik said: "He was a humane man, but do not forget that God is the most just and the most merciful, and since he is merciful to those who trust in him, he clears the way for them, especially if the trusting one should be suffering injury."

A few hours after his arrival at Constantinople he was triumphantly acquitted and released. He hurried to Beirut, and from there went to his birthplace. A message was sent to his family to join him there as soon as possible. They had been suffering much persecution at the hands of the enemies who had succeeded in bringing about his arrest.

As soon as possible, he went to Egypt, taking with him his son. There he found employment in the Nile Mission Press. While he was absent from his room, seeking work, his son was persuaded to leave home by those who hated the father for his Christian faith. A forged paper was shown the boy which purported to be a confession signed by his father, as follows:

"When all means of livelihood were shut in my face wherever I went among the Moslems, and I found no possibility of earning a living except by pretending to become a Christian, and when the Christians made me hear the chink of coins and said, 'Declare your

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belief in the Trinity and take the money,' I said, 'Give me the money, and if you wish I will not only triple but quadruple, for from my early days I have never cared for any religion at all!'

The paper was read to him by the man who had fabricated it. The man pretended sorrow for his deed and asked him to enter his house. The invitation was refused, for the sheik recalled the teaching of the Koran, "Whosoever changeth his religion, kill him."

"Then I left him in haste, asking God to protect me," the persecuted Christian says.

After his baptism the sheiks approached him once more with all sorts of trials. He took away their breath by saying to them:

"The happiest and most blessed hour of my life will be the time in which I am killed—a martyr; for I shall then go straight to heaven, to be with Christ in the eternal glory. I do not think, however, that God will allow you to do this, for it is his purpose that I should serve the Moslems while a Christian, even as I used to serve them while a Moslem."

When the runaway son arrived in Syria, some of those to whom he gave the word that his father had become a Christian wrote to ask the sheik his reasons for taking the step. In reply, he wrote out a Confession of Faith, which he printed and sent to those who had written to him.

His wife wrote to ask for traveling expenses. She said she wished to come to him. But when she tried to leave home, she was prevented. When the sheik learned of this, he asked Christian friends to pray with him that he might have his wife and son with him

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once more. The united prayers so strengthened his faith that when his wife asked him a second time for expense money, he sent it to her. This time she was able to go to him, with her son.

In closing his story this convert from Mohammedanism said :

“ As for my family, my wife now believes that Christ is the greatest of all the prophets, and she has seen already many answers to her prayers asked in his name. May God continue his work in her heart by his great grace, that her faith may be built upon a firm foundation. My boy ran away to Syria on two occasions, but I trust that God will prevent its happening again. At present he is learning the trade of carpentering. God is able to guide him to himself.

“ I ask our gracious God, in the name of our beloved Saviour, to keep us steadfast in the true faith, that grace may grow in our hearts more and more, that we may be enabled to save many of our fellow men for the holy kingdom of him who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life. Amen.”

XV

IN SCHOOL WITH CHRIST

WHEN J. Hudson Taylor, the founder of the China Inland Mission, decided as to the character of his life work, he planned to prepare for it not only by taking a medical course, but by accustoming himself to hardness and economy, so that he might be able to bear with grace the trying conditions of the life before him.

But, as he proposed to go out in dependence on God alone for protection, supplies, and help of every kind, he felt that his spiritual muscles required strengthening for such an undertaking.

"There was no doubt," he said,¹ "that if faith did not fail, God would not fail; but, then, what if one's faith should prove insufficient? I had not at that time learned that even 'if we believe not, he abideth faithful, he cannot deny himself'; and it was consequently a very serious question to my mind, not whether he was faithful, but whether I had strong enough faith to warrant my embarking in the enterprise set before me.

"I thought to myself, 'When I get out to China, I shall have no claim on anyone for anything; my only claim will be on God. How important, therefore, to

¹ In "A Retrospect."

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learn before leaving England to move man, through God, by prayer alone.'

"On settling up my weekly accounts one Saturday night, I found myself possessed of only a single coin—one half-crown piece.

"That Sunday was a very happy one. As usual my heart was full, and brimming over with blessing. After attending Divine service in the morning, my afternoons and evenings were filled with gospel work in the various lodging houses I was accustomed to visit in the lowest part of the town. At such times it almost seemed to me as if heaven were begun below, and that all that could be looked for was an enlargement of one's capacity for joy, not a truer filling than I possessed. After concluding my last service about ten o'clock that night, a poor man asked me to go and pray with his wife, saying that she was dying. I readily agreed, and on the way to his house asked him why he had not sent for the priest, as his accent told me he was an Irishman. He had done so, he said, but the priest refused to come without a payment of eighteenpence, which the man did not possess, as the family was starving. Immediately it occurred to my mind that all the money I had in the world was the solitary half-crown, and that it was in one coin; moreover, that while the basin of water gruel I usually took for supper was awaiting me, and there was sufficient in the house for breakfast in the morning, I certainly had nothing for dinner on the coming day.

"Somehow or other there was at once a stoppage in the flow of joy in my heart; but instead of reproving myself I began to reprove the poor man, telling him

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that it was very wrong to have allowed matters to get into such a state as he described, and that he ought to have applied to the relieving officer. His answer was that he had done so, and was told to come at eleven o'clock the next morning, but that he feared his wife might not live through the night. 'Ah,' thought I, 'if only I had two shillings and a sixpence instead of this half-crown, how gladly would I give these poor people one shilling of it!' But to part with the half-crown was far from my thoughts. I little dreamed that the real truth of the matter simply was that I could trust in God plus one-and-sixpence, but that I was not yet prepared to trust him only, without any money at all in my pocket.

"My conductor led me into a court, down which I followed him with some degree of nervousness. I had found myself there before, and at my last visit had been very roughly handled, while my tracts were torn to pieces, and I received such a warning not to come again that I felt more than a little concerned. Still, it was the path of duty, and I followed on. Up a miserable flight of stairs, into a wretched room, he led me; and oh, what a sight there presented itself to our eyes! Four or five poor children stood about, their sunken cheeks and temples all telling unmistakably the story of slow starvation; and lying on a wretched pallet was a poor exhausted mother, with a tiny infant thirty-six hours old, moaning rather than crying at her side, for it too seemed spent and failing. 'Ah,' thought I, 'if I had two shillings and a sixpence instead of half-a-crown, how gladly should they have one-and-sixpence of it!' But still a wretched un-

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lief prevented me from obeying the impulse to relieve their distress at the cost of all I possessed.

“ It will scarcely seem strange that I was unable to say much to comfort these poor people. I needed comfort myself. I began to tell them, however, that they must not be cast down, that though their circumstances were very distressing, there was a kind and loving Father in heaven; but something within me said, ‘ You hypocrite! telling these unconverted people about a kind and loving Father in heaven, and not prepared yourself to trust him without half-a-crown! ’ I was nearly choked. How gladly would I have compromised with conscience if I had had a florin and a sixpence! I would have given the florin thankfully and kept the rest; but I was not yet prepared to trust in God alone, without the sixpence.

“ To talk was impossible under these circumstances; yet, strange to say, I thought I should have no difficulty in praying. Prayer was a delightful occupation to me in those days; time thus spent never seemed wearisome, and I knew nothing of lack of words. I seemed to think that all I should have to do would be to kneel down and engage in prayer, and that relief would come to them and to myself together. ‘ You asked me to come and pray with your wife,’ I said to the man; ‘ let us pray.’ And I knelt down. But scarcely had I opened my lips with ‘ Our Father who art in heaven’ than conscience said within, ‘ Dare you mock God? Dare you kneel down and call him Father with that half-crown in your pocket?’ Such a time of conflict came upon me then as I have never experienced before or since. How I got through that form of

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prayer I know not, and whether the words uttered were connected or disconnected I cannot tell; but I arose from my knees in great distress of mind.

"The poor father turned to me and said, 'You see what a terrible state we are in, sir; if you can help us, for God's sake do.' Just then the word flashed into my mind, 'Give to him that asketh of thee,' and in the word of a King there is power. I put my hand into my pocket, and slowly drawing forth the half-crown, gave it to the man, telling him that it might seem a small matter for me to relieve them, seeing that I was comparatively well off, but that in parting with that coin I was giving him my all; what I had been trying to tell him was indeed true—God really was a Father, and might be trusted. The joy all came back in full flood tide to my heart; I could say anything and feel it then, and the hindrance to blessing was gone—gone, I trust, forever.

"Not only was the poor woman's life saved, but I realized that my life was saved too! It might have been a wreck—would have been a wreck probably, as a Christian life—had not grace at that time conquered, and the striving of God's Spirit been obeyed. I well remember how that night, as I went home to my lodgings, my heart was as light as my pocket. The lonely, deserted streets resounded with a hymn of praise which I could not restrain. When I took my basin of gruel before retiring, I would not have exchanged it for a prince's feast. I reminded the Lord as I knelt at my bedside of his own Word, that he who giveth to the poor lendeth to the Lord; I asked him not to let my loan be a long one, or I should have no dinner next

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day; and with peace within and peace without, I spent a happy, restful night.

“ Next morning for breakfast my plate of porridge remained, and before it was consumed the postman’s knock was heard at the door. I was not in the habit of receiving letters on Monday, as my parents and most of my friends refrained from posting on Saturday; so that I was somewhat surprised when the landlady came in holding a letter or packet in her wet hand covered by her apron. I looked at the letter, but could not make out the handwriting. It was either a strange hand or a feigned one, and the postmark was blurred. Where it came from I could not tell. On opening the envelope I found nothing written within; but inside a sheet of blank paper was folded a pair of kid gloves, from which, as I opened them in astonishment, half-a-sovereign fell to the ground. ‘Praise the Lord!’ I exclaimed; ‘four hundred per cent. for twelve hours’ investment; that is good interest. How glad the merchants of Hull would be if they could lend their money at such a rate!’ I then and there determined that a bank which could not break should have my savings or earnings, as the case might be—a determination I have not yet learned to regret.”

In concluding the story Mr. Taylor added: “I cannot tell you how often my mind has recurred to this incident, or all the help it has been to me in circumstances of difficulty in after life. If we are faithful to God in little things, we shall gain experience and strength that will be helpful to us in the more serious trials of life.”

Another lesson in faith was learned years later when

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he was planning to go to China with other missionaries who had volunteered in answer to prayer. Application was made to the leading missionary societies to undertake the support of the company, but in vain. Some friends told him this meant that he must delay his departure. However, he felt he must go at once, as the need was great. Then he thought, "If you see these matters more clearly than others, why not go forward yourself and trust God to accomplish his purpose through you? What is to hinder?"

What followed is told by Marshall Broomhall,¹ quoting Mr. Taylor.

"I saw that in answer to prayer the workers needed would certainly be given, and their support secured because asked for in the precious name of Jesus, which is worthy; but there a trembling unbelief crept in.

"'Suppose that workers are given,' I asked myself doubtfully, 'and that they succeed even in reaching inland China; what then? Trials will surely come; such conflicts, perhaps, as they have never dreamed of at home. Their faith may fail, and they may even be tempted to reproach one for having brought them into such a plight. Have I strength and ability to cope with such difficulties as these?'

"And the answer, of course, was always 'No!' It was just a bringing in of self through unbelief, the devil getting one to feel that, while prayer and faith might lead one into the dilemma, one would be left to get out of it as best one might. And I failed entirely to see that the Power that would give the

¹ In "Faith and Facts."

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laborers would be sufficient also to sustain them, under any circumstances, no matter how trying."

"Week after week the conflict went on, until at last the pressure upon mind and soul became so intense that sleep forsook him, and it seemed as if reason itself must fail. Rest was impossible day or night."

"How inconsistent unbelief always is," Mr. Taylor continues. "I had no doubt that if I prayed for fellow workers they would be given me. I had no doubt that in answer to prayer the means for going forth would also be supplied, and that doors would be opened before us in unreached parts of the Empire. But I had not then learned to trust God fully for keeping power and grace for myself, so it was not much to be wondered at that I found a difficulty in trusting him to keep any others who might be led to go out with me."

"Summer succeeded spring, and by this time the burden upon his mind began seriously to affect Mr. Taylor's health," Mr. Broomhall added. "Mr. George Pearse, seeing how worn and weary Mr. Taylor was looking, pressed him to come down to Brighton and take a rest by the sea. This kind invitation was gladly accepted, though it seemed more than doubtful whether the change of scene would bring any relief of heart.

"Sunday morning came, June 25, and to the music of bells, borne far and wide upon the peaceful air, hundreds of happy churchgoers thronged the quiet streets. But there was one burdened soul that could not join the multitudes on their way to the house of God. The all-absorbing realization in Mr. Taylor's mind, that seemed to darken with its shadow every thought of

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brighter things, was still that of the need of the vast land to which his life was given.

"In distress of mind that seemed to have reached its climax, he left the quiet house and went down the hill to the forsaken beach. It was a lovely summer morning; the tide was out; and far away upon the silent sands he met the crisis of his life, alone with God.

"At first there was no light, and the conflict was intense. The only ray of comfort he could obtain was from the strange reflection: 'Well, if God, in answer to prayer, does give a band of men for inland China, and they go and reach those distant regions, and if the worst should come to the worst, and they all die of starvation even, they will all go straight to heaven; and if only one heathen soul is saved it would be well worth while.' But the thought was agony; for still he could not see that God, if he gave the laborers, would be sure to keep them, even in inland China.

"All at once, however, came the further thought: 'Why burdened thus? If you are simply obeying God, all the responsibility must rest with him, and not with you.'

"'Very well,' was the immediate, glad reply; 'thou, Lord, shalt be responsible for them, and for me too!' And the burden from that moment was all gone.

"Then and there Mr. Taylor surrendered himself to God for this service, and lifted up his heart in prayer for fellow laborers—two for each of the inland provinces, and two for Mongolia. His Bible was in his hand; and there upon the margin of the precious volume he at once recorded the momentous transaction

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that had taken place between his soul and God. Few and simple are the words he uses; but oh, how full of meaning!

“‘ Prayed for twenty-four willing, skillful laborers, at Brighton, June 25, 1865.

“‘ How restfully I turned away from the shore,’ he adds, ‘ when this was done. The conflict was all ended. Peace and gladness filled my soul.’ ”

FOUR

THE JUSTIFICATION OF FAITH

Fain would I hold my lamp of life aloft,
Like yonder tower built high above the reef;
Steadfast, though tempests rave or winds blow soft,
Clear, though the sky dissolve in tears of grief.

For darkness passes; storms shall not abide.
A little patience, and the fog is past.
After the sorrow of the ebbing tide,
The singing flood returns in joy at last.

The night is long, and pain weighs heavily;
But God will hold his world above despair.
Look to the east, where up the lucid sky
The morning climbs! The day shall yet be fair.

—CELIA THAXTER.

XVI

IN TIME OF DOUBT

THERE are those who claim to have faith in God, yet deny the faith by an attitude of doubt and fear. Faith that is worthy the name puts an end to fear.

When John Bunyan wrote of the experience of the pilgrim of his dream, who, wearied and sleeping by the wayside, was captured by Giant Despair and imprisoned in Doubting Castle, from which he escaped only with great difficulty, he was picturing the experience of every Christian who permits himself to be a slave to his doubts.

He had himself learned the bitter sorrow caused by such doubts, for in his early Christian life he was disturbed by thoughts of his own unworthiness. "Who was he that God should care for him?" his biographer Froude records his thoughts. "He fancied that he heard God saying to the angels: 'This poor, simple wretch doth hanker after me as if I had nothing to do with my mercy but to bestow it on such as he. Poor fool, how art thou deceived? It is not for such as thee to have favor with the Highest!'"

Of doubts which came at a still later period, Bunyan himself wrote: "What floods of blasphemies against God, Christ, and the Scriptures were poured upon my spirit; questions against the very being of God and

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his only beloved Son, as whether there was in truth a God or Christ or no, and whether the Holy Scriptures were not rather a fable and cunning story than the holy and pure word of God. ‘How can you tell,’ the tempter whispered, ‘but that the Turks have as good a scripture to prove their Mahomet the Saviour as we have to prove our Jesus is?’ Could I think that so many tens of thousands in so many countries and kingdoms should be without the knowledge of the right way to heaven—if there were, indeed, a heaven and that we who lie in a corner of the earth should be alone blessed therewith? Everyone doth think his own religion the rightest—both Jews, Moors, and pagans; and how if all our faith and Christ and scripture should be but a ‘think so,’ too?”

When Bunyan was in Bedford jail because he would preach the gospel, he had a hard time, but he did not despair because of it. Thus he had the best possible preparation, when writing “The Pilgrim’s Progress,” for telling others how to resist despondency. In fact, he conquered his difficulties by making them serve his purposes. When most men would have been regretting the lost opportunities for active labor, he was busily engaged in writing a book which would probably never have seen the light if it had not been for his misfortunes.

In his book he pictured the Slough of Despond, a morass into which Christian fell while he was on the way from the City of Destruction. Everything seemed against him as he struggled in the ooze, and he was tempted to give up the fight. But he struggled with his difficulties, and overcame them.

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The Slough of Despond lies in the path of every Christian, and they are few who do not fall into it. The young Christian is especially apt to give way to doubts as he asks himself: "I wonder if I haven't undertaken too much?" "Perhaps I have deceived myself, and I am not a Christian at all," another thinks. "My sins are too great for forgiveness," is the fear of a third, while a fourth feels that his circumstances are so peculiar that it is impossible for him to live a Christian life.

"Why did you not look for the steps?" Christian was asked when the Slough was finally left behind him. A way had been provided for him, but he did not see it; he was too heedless. That is the difficulty to-day. The descent into doubt and despondency comes because of heedlessness. A way has been provided for safe passage when courage is faint and fears take possession of the mind. The steps on the way are marked by the promises and precepts of God's Word. So the cure for despondency is to be found in turning to that Word, or in mentally reviewing promises like, "Lo, I am with you always," "I will not leave you comfortless," and "When thou passest through the waters I will be with thee." On these promises men may stand safely, no matter what the dangers, fancied or real, about them.

The honest struggler is not left to his own resources. God is ever ready to stretch out a helping hand to those who will own that they are powerless themselves. The man named Help was sent to Bunyan's hero, and help will just as certainly be given to everyone who asks for it.

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It is perfectly safe to tell God all our doubts and fears, but we should be wary of talking too much about them to others. It is often easy to shake the faith even of those who seem to be strong Christians. Shall we drag them down with us? Dare we take the risk? The Psalmist decided that he could not. "If I had said, I will speak thus, behold I had dealt treacherously with the generation of thy children." Then he suggested a safer, surer cure. He went to the house of God, and there in prayer and praise his doubts were all solved.

From the house of God let the doubter go out to serve his fellows. "I am losing my faith in God," was the plaint of a young man. His wise pastor seemed to pay no heed to his words; he only asked him to keep an eye on a boy who needed constant help and counsel. A month later the pastor asked the young man, "How about your doubts now?" "I have entirely forgotten that I ever had any doubts," was the answer.

Hannah Whitall Smith once called attention thus to the fact that Bunyan's doubts, of which he told so vividly in both biography and allegory, are known to all: "We, all of us, remember, doubtless, our childish fascination, and yet horror, in the story of Christian's imprisonment in Doubting Castle, with the wicked Giant Despair, and our exultant sympathy in his escape through those massive gates from that cruel tyrant. Little did we suspect that we would ever find ourselves taken prisoner by the same giant, and imprisoned in the same castle. But I fear that each one of us, if we were perfectly honest, would have to confess to at least

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one such experience, and some of us, perhaps, to a great many."

It was a favorite expression of D. L. Moody that the cure for doubt is Christian work, "for," he said, "the men who work are rarely men who doubt." When he was asked what a young man should do who believed that Jesus lived the ideal life, but doubted his supernatural origin and being, he said: "Tell him to put all his time in imitation of the life, and be so busy imitating that there will be no time to doubt."

The way to silence doubts adopted by a simple-minded country woman proved effective in her case; her example is worth imitating. To her pastor, who greeted her one day, "Hoo is it wi' you the day, Janet?" she replied, "The adversary's been at me again." "And what's he been sayin' to you?" "He's been sayin', 'It's a' a delusion; the Bible a tissue of lies: there is no heaven an' no hell; there's no Saviour; it's a' a delusion.'" "And what did you answer?" "Ah, minister, I kent better than that. I kent it was nae use to argy wi' him; I just referred him to the Lord."

You have some mountain of difficulty in your way? You feel that it cannot be removed? Then you have not tried faith. Have faith in God, and you will find in your hands a lever that will move the world.

In every time of doubt and temptation, of fear and anxiety, of grief and anguish, we may, if we will, hear the message of the Master, "It is I; be not afraid." The disciples heard it when they were in peril on the sea, and their fears vanished. Why do we not hearken as they did?

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It is said that a poor colored woman was asked by her mistress, "Nancy, suppose that you should have a spell of sickness, and be unable to work: or suppose—" "Stop!" was the eager reply. "I neber supposes. De Lord is my shepherd, and I knows I shall not want, and honey, it's all dem supposes as is makin' you so mis'able. You'd better give dem all up, and just trust de Lord."

Clinton Scollard gave a needed lesson when he said:

Doubt digged a fortress deep and dim,
Guarded by mote and ravelin;
And, having fettered every limb,
He dungeoned me therein.

Then victor Faith's illumining star
Shone in upon my black despair,
And back flew rivet, bolt and bar,
And I was free as air.

XVII

THEY CAUGHT THE SHIP

IN 1901 the Australian Council of the China Inland Mission wished to send a party of seven missionary recruits from Sydney. Not only did they wish to send them, but they decided to send them on December 17. They felt that this was what God wished them to do, and that therefore the means would be provided. They proposed to do their part: their faith that God would do his part was firm.

The story of the justification of their faith has been told by Marshall Broomhall:¹

"The advertised day of sailing arrived, but enough money had not been received to pay the passages. The boat was postponed for two days, and on Wednesday a special meeting of the Council in Melbourne was called for prayer, to lay once more the whole matter before the Lord. Afterwards a sum of money was received sufficient to complete the payment of five passages. Thursday dawned, and a telegram had to be sent to Sydney, instructing the two young men who were tarrying there to wait for the next steamer.

"To say that we were puzzled is putting it lightly; for the first time it seemed as if the promises of God had failed us! We unitedly bowed before him asking him to show us where the mistake had been, and how

¹ In "Faith and Facts."

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we had failed to recognize his will, for all of us had felt most clearly that it was his will for all this party to go, that when we came face to face with the fact that two had been left behind, it seemed to us incomprehensible, for we still felt that we were in the line of his holy will. We humbled ourselves before God, but we could get no light at all, and the riddle seemed insoluble.

" Friday morning, the first post brought us a check for £25, and the first thought was, ' Why not yesterday, Lord? It's too late now,' and it was put on one side; after breakfast the thought came, would it be possible for them to catch the steamer at Brisbane by going overland from Sydney? but on looking up the time-table, we found that it could not be done in the time, unless the agents would delay her for us. We communicated with the shipping company, and in the afternoon came the delightful news that the *Changsha* had not left Sydney till that morning at eight o'clock! If, then, we could only let the young men know, they might still catch her! Earlier in the day a preparatory telegram had been sent to our Sydney Secretary, and we now sent word to Mr. Martin for the young men to go on. We felt sure that the Lord who had thus opened up a new way to China would not fail us now, but we were kept waiting till the next evening, when a wire came, ' Webster and Bird caught train. The Lord Jesus meant John xiv. 14.' Of course he did, and we felt most thankful that we had not once doubted his Word or his wisdom."

XVIII

MOVING MOUNTAINS IN JAPAN

EARLY in the present century B. C. Miyamoto, a student in Hashiman Academy, in the province of Omi, Japan, became a Christian. But he was the only Christian in the school, and he longed for some one to whom he might take his problems. Daily he prayed that God would send the Christian teacher for whom he longed, by whom, too, his fellow students might be led to share his joy in Christ.

Months passed. No Christian arrived. Still he prayed, for his faith was firm that God would give him his desire. Graduation day came, and he thought he would have to leave the school without having his teacher. But he was asked to serve as teacher of English, so he remained.

While he prayed, God was preparing the answer. William Murrell Vories had volunteered to go from the United States to teach in Hashiman Academy. As a condition of accepting the appointment he had stipulated that he should be allowed to teach Bible classes in his leisure time.

Eagerly he looked forward to reaching his field, but when at last he stepped from the train near the academy, he realized that he was practically alone in a province which had long been looked upon as a center of Buddhism. He knew that the ancient religion still

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had a wonderful hold on the more ignorant of the people, and that the educated men would be difficult to reach, for, turning from Buddhism, they had become agnostics. He would have been downcast if he had allowed himself to dwell on these difficulties, but he was resolved to go ahead in God's strength.

Before he knew the language he asked his students to visit him in his room. He played games with them till he was on good terms with them. Then he knew enough of the language to ask them if they would join a Bible class for students. They did not know what he meant, but they agreed to his proposal, some for the sake of politeness, others because of curiosity.

With fear and trembling the missionary began his first lesson. He knew only a few words of the language. How, then, could he teach them? He thought that perhaps he was foolish to go ahead with such inadequate preparation. Yet he knew he must go on with his task.

God honored his faith. Miyamoto made known his eagerness to act as interpreter—Miyamoto, the lonely Christian who had prayed for a man who would lead him into fuller knowledge of the truth.

The forty-five young men who attended the first session of the Bible class were so much interested that they told their friends. Before long more than three hundred students were enrolled in four classes and were listening with rapt attention to the simple presentation of Bible truth.

The young teacher was pleased with the results, but he realized that the work would be incomplete until the young men could see other natives who had been trans-

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formed by Christ. There were none to whom he could point them, save his interpreter, and he was only a beginner in the Christian life.

Finally, after long and earnest prayer, and after conference with Miyamoto, it was decided that they two must live the Christ life before the students so constantly that the students would realize the power of the words taught. In humility they asked that they might be given grace to be true witnesses, not only in hours when duty called them before the men, but at all times.

Then they went a step further. They invited one of the students to share with them their room, in order that they might by hourly contact "help him to apply the principles of Christianity to the practical problems of Christian life, and thus develop from their own number an example that would help solve the dilemma."

The experiment was so successful that they invited others to come with them, till before long seven natives were sharing their poor quarters. These became so crowded that it was necessary to use a "disused and rat-infested attic."

As others wished to live with them on the same terms, they looked for larger quarters. None could be found, however; no one in the town seemed to desire to help the young Christians.

They were not discouraged. They formed the daring plan of erecting a Young Men's Christian Association building. But they could not secure even a lot.

Of course they told God of their difficulty and God showed them the way out. He sent to them a native

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from Kyoto who desired to give a Christian church to the town, in which he had spent his boyhood. When he learned of their plan he gave them the deed to the best corner lot in town, stipulating that half of this should become the site of the church, while half should be reserved for the Y. M. C. A. building.

Then their faith was tried by opposition. Buddhist priests, disturbed by the popularity of the new religion among the young men, and fearful lest their own fat fees become less, stirred up trouble. They threatened Mr. Vories, and when they found that they could not move him, they appealed to those responsible for the school to forbid the continued teaching of religion by their employees.

It proved an easy matter to provoke some of the unruly students to persecute their Christian fellows. At first they were satisfied with petty annoyances, but, becoming bolder, they attacked the Christians by night and sometimes left them senseless on the ground.

To Vories the students came for help. What should they do? - To whom should they go? He could only tell them to go to God with their troubles and perplexities. So they agreed to meet each morning in the room of the teacher for fifteen minutes of prayer.

The first day twelve men went. Earnestly they asked God to deliver them from their tormentors. Then they went out, encouraged. But they were dismayed when, next day, their opponents redoubled their annoying attacks.

Prayers were continued. More were present at the second gathering. Before the end of the month forty daily asked God to give them courage to face their

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foes and to open the way to serve him as they desired.

Mr. Vories,¹ tells how the answer came. It was not in "a lessening of the abuses, but in a change in the men themselves." God's Spirit descended on the prayer meetings. Those who were already Christians became more devoted. Some of the students who had hesitated to accept Christ decided to become his followers.

The persecuting Japanese, learning these facts, redoubled their efforts, but to their surprise they were unable to make any impression on the Christians. The prayer meetings they had ridiculed increased in number, and as they saw the students going to and from the meetings and to their places in class, they marveled at the marks of peace and joy on the faces of the men.

What could be the cause of this strange power of the Christians to smile at their worst efforts? What did they do at their prayer meetings? They resolved to learn. Two of their number agreed to spy on one of the gatherings. Assuring their fellows that they would learn the secret, they attended a prayer meeting. Their eyes were open wide and their ears were attentive. But they saw nothing but kneeling men, they heard nothing but petitions that God would give blessing to those who prayed and to those who opposed and persecuted them. And they were conquered. "They were overcome and melted to tears in the very meeting which they had come to report upon."

The Christians had conquered. Their faith was justified. Both spies became Christians, and made

¹ In "A Mustard Seed in Japan."

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public confession of their sin in persecuting their fellows, and sought forgiveness.

Alarmed, the Buddhist priests brought pressure on the Commissioner of Education, and he informed the principal of the academy that Vories must cease to teach Bible classes, or resign. In case he was retained, and continued his Bible work, the state appropriation to the school would be discontinued.

At the end of the two years covered by the teacher's contract he was obliged to give up his work.

What then? Must he leave the town? Must he desert the young Christians who depended on him, without erecting the buildings for which he had the lot all ready?

He decided that he could not forsake the Christian students. They needed him, and he needed them. Together they must face the future, conquering difficulties through their faith in God, and winning their way until their right to worship God in that Buddhist community was recognized by the priests.

In the face of constant opposition a modest church building was erected. Then, courageously, the leader faced the future, not knowing how support was to come.

Ways appeared. A tourist who had become interested in the young Christians began to send twenty-five dollars a month for the work. Then Vories thought of a plan to add to the income and support himself. Before becoming a student volunteer he had been a student of architecture. Now was the time to put his knowledge to practical use! Surely at mission stations and elsewhere he would be called on to design

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and superintend the erection of buildings, when once it became known that he was ready for commissions.

He found the work he sought. Friends in Japan and the United States became interested in the mission. Other workers volunteered, until there were twenty at the station. The parent church became self-supporting. Young Men's Christian Associations were organized at three points, two of these being railroad towns. A motor boat began to carry gospel messages to all points on the sixty-mile lake which is one of the province's chief features.

And still the work goes on in this Buddhist stronghold, increasing in power and reaching more of the people who were so long in bondage to the priests, a monument to faith in God and to God's blessing on workers who trusted in him.

XIX

A LIFE OF TRUST IN THE DESERT

BE-GWO-ET-TEN goes to his death!"

This was the mournful chant of the Navajo friends of an Indian seventy years old as he turned his back on his home and rode to the Arizona court which was to try him for willful murder. He was innocent of the charge. But the Indians had learned by experience that there was not much hope for one of their race on trial by a jury of cowboys and cattle-owners. How could they expect to convince judge and jury that the cowboy killed by Be-gwo-et-ten had persecuted him for months, and at the moment of death was forcing his way, fully armed, into a native hunting camp? How could there be anything but death in store for an Indian who had dared to lift his hand against a white man, even in self-defense?

But Be-gwo-et-ten closed his ears to the wailing of his friends. He had given his word that he would appear for trial. So he rode one hundred and eighty miles, although weak from a bullet wound, and reached the county seat on the appointed day.

There a surprise was in store for the old hero. A stranger, learning of his case and convinced of his innocence, had interested friends in the East, and had secured counsel for the accused. The result was his

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acquittal. The Indians rejoiced, and were ready to do anything for their benefactor.

The stranger was Mr. W. R. Johnston, who had heard the call of twenty-five thousand Navajos among whom no missionary labored. With no assurance of support other than the prayers of a few friends and the promises of God, he took his family to the Arizona desert. His first home was a tent on the bank of the Little Colorado River, fifty miles from Flagstaff. There a clearing was made in a cottonwood grove, and a one-room cabin was built. This primitive structure, somewhat enlarged, was long the main building of the mission.

When Mr. Johnston sought to begin his work, he found many difficulties in his way. First of all, he had to win the confidence of the Indians. He was told that this was impossible. But he believed that God would open the way to the hearts of the red men, whom he longed to help. In consequence of the assistance given Be-gwo-et-ten in his time of need, friends were made by hundreds.

But there was still a serious hindrance to his work. The Navajos, who are not annuity Indians, but earn their living by sheep-raising, were compelled to be rovers. Their reservation is large, but, owing to the lack of water, is useless for grazing purposes at least six months in the year. So the herders wander about in search of pasture. They remain, it may be, but a few weeks in a place, and so cannot be effectively reached by Christian workers.

Mr. Johnston realized that he must break up their nomadic habits. If he would do this successfully,

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permanent pasturage must be provided. The reservation itself offered little opportunity for the carrying out of his plans. The extra-reservation lands, however, are watered by the Little Colorado; that is, when there is any water in the stream, which is only periodically. The bed is dry except after the infrequent rains, and when the melting snows send down floods from the mountains. Then the dry bed speedily becomes a torrent.

Mr. Johnston thought of the blessing to the Indians if only a dam could be constructed and these flood waters retained for use in time of drought. Discouragers told the missionary that he could not succeed in building the dam, and that, even if the dam were built, he had no assurance that the land redeemed by so much labor would not be taken from them by greedy settlers. They had seen this result so often that it was difficult to interest them in the plan. They were afraid of the white man. But Mr. Johnston believed God would help him. So, to assure the Indians of the permanency of their investment of labor, Mr. Johnston, with two Navajos, went to Washington and appealed to President Roosevelt to withdraw from settlement the land on the river, near the mission, in order to permit its survey and allotment to the Navajos, according to law. The request was granted, and another difficulty was removed.

Then the irrigation work was begun in earnest. A canal was dug, and a crude pile driver was made by Mr. Johnston and an assistant, with the aid of a few Indians. Some tools were furnished by the Indian Rights Association of Philadelphia. Whenever funds

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specially contributed for the purpose were exhausted, the work was discontinued. Mr. Johnston was the tireless superintendent, and his Navajo helpers were inspired by his example. They were hungry, but still they worked with dogged determination. Food was given them whenever the missionary had it to give, but frequently the members of the family at the station were more hungry than the Indians. On one occasion, when the mission team was hired by settlers in the neighborhood, the proceeds were used to feed Indian workers for two weeks. At another time prayer was offered for relief for the starving laborers, and the answer came in the shape of drafts for one hundred and two dollars from the Indian Rights Association.

When the dam was within three days of completion, a flood came down, caused by rains in the uplands. When the Indians saw their work threatened, men, women, and children were called into service. One woman nearly seventy years of age worked with the others to save what represented so much to the tribe. The flood gradually worked its way around the unfinished end of the dam, and soon cut a wide channel through it.

But the Indians were not discouraged. Again they set to work. The breach was repaired, only to be opened by a second flood. A third attempt was made, and the structure was finally finished—three hundred feet of stone and timber. Then all waited eagerly for the rising of the water.

Although that season's freshet was not so great as usual, the water retained by the dam was still enough to prove the feasibility of Mr. Johnston's plans for irri-

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gation. The ditches were filled, and the underground streams were replenished, so that a number of windmills drew water from wells driven in convenient locations.

Then once more the cry was raised, "The river is coming!" As before, every available hand was raised to avert the threatened calamity, but in spite of strenuous efforts the rushing waters tore a gap in the dam. Owing to unscientific engineering and the lack of proper tools in building, the structure was too weak to withstand great pressure.

This was in 1902. In December Mr. Johnston was urged by the Commissioner of Indian Affairs to visit Washington for a conference with the department. Two leading Navajos, She-she-nez and Pesh-la-ki Etsetty, accompanied him. Mr. Johnston told Commissioner Jones of the vain efforts to build the dam. Deeply interested, Mr. Jones asked what it would take to complete, in a first-class manner, their irrigation plant, including ditch, dam, material for conduits, and mills. When a rough estimate was made, he at once said that five thousand dollars could be appropriated for the purpose, and requested Mr. Johnston to accept an appointment from the government to take general oversight of the work. The appointment was accepted on condition that no salary be paid. The Commissioner unwillingly agreed, but insisted on sending out a clerk, that the missionary might be relieved of the accounts and correspondence.

In February, 1903, a competent engineer was hired, and the work of rebuilding was begun. A number of miles of ditch and laterals were laid off, and plans

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were drawn for a more massive dam. The Indians flocked in, hungry, and eager for a chance to earn their bread at work which promised so much for their future. One old man, who lived across the river, walked ninety miles to reach the works. The river was high and the water was cold; but, securing a shovel, he swam across and asked for employment. There was soon an entire brigade of old men who worked diligently. Their ages ranged from fifty to eighty years. By March 8 there were seventy-eight Indians of all ages on the pay roll. They were unskilled and undisciplined, but they responded readily to the instruction of their foremen. Soon the dam was completed.

At the mission no salaries are paid to anyone, for there is no treasury of a mission board upon which to make drafts at stated intervals. However, Mr. and Mrs. Johnston and their associates from the first made their drafts, morning and evening and many times each day, upon the full treasury of Him whom giving doth not impoverish. "Faith Mission" would be a true name for the station thus supported by the God who hears and answers prayer. For God answered those prayers; the drafts were honored, the work prospered. Sometimes, to be sure, there was little in the house either to eat or to wear. Often the parents did not know how the day's wants were to be supplied. At times the father's shoes were mere uppers. But always God sent his angel, and his servants did not suffer.

No appeals were made to anyone but God. A little periodical, "A Neglected People," was the organ of the mission. In every number this motto was prominently

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displayed, "As to needs, full information. As to funds, no solicitation."

Is it strange that this interdenominational mission to the Navajos, founded in faith and nurtured in prayer, has been blessed by the Father of the faithful?

FIVE
ENCOURAGEMENTS

Yet, in the maddening maze of things,
And tossed by storm and flood,
To one fixed stake my spirit clings,
I know that God is good! . . .

I know not what the future hath
Of marvel or surprise,
Assured alone that life and death
His mercy underlies . . .

And so beside the Silent Sea
I wait the muffled oar.
No harm from Him can come to me
On ocean or on shore.

I know not where His islands lift
Their fronded palms in air;
I only know I cannot drift
Beyond His love and care.

—JOHN G. WHITTIER.

XX

IN GOD'S STRENGTH

THREE is so much that ought to be done; but there are so few of us that we do not feel able to undertake the work."

When the temptation comes to a Christian to say something like that, he needs to think of the reply made by a corporal of the Royal Northwest Mounted Police of Canada to the commander of a troop of soldiers. The soldiers had just brought a company of two hundred wild Cree Indians to the place where they were to be turned over to the police, who would guard them to their reservation. "Where's your escort for these Indians?" the question was asked of the corporal, who stood at the head of a file of two of his men. "We're here!" the corporal replied. "Yes, yes, I see. But where's your regiment?" "I guess it's here all right," once more the corporal made reply; "the other fellow's looking after the breakfast things." "But are there only four of you then?" "That's so, colonel, but then you see we wear the queen's scarlet," was the firm answer of the corporal. Conscious that he wore the uniform of a mighty sovereign, that corporal was ready to undertake any duty that came to him.

Then why should a Christian fear to do work God has put in his way? He does not stand alone. He

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wears the uniform of the mighty God, and always underneath him are the everlasting arms of love.

When faith is weak and the Christian loses courage, when the present is all dark and he dreads to think of the future, there is sure relief in thinking of the ever-present Helper, and recalling what God has done in previous times of affliction. Has there ever been a danger through which God has not helped him if he has given God the chance? The result of such argument will be the same serene confidence that enabled David to say (it is supposed on the night that he was fleeing from Jerusalem on account of Absalom's rebellion), "In peace will I both lay me down and sleep; for thou, Jehovah, alone makest me dwell in safety," and justification will come to modern makers of the prayer, as it came to him, so that, next morning, he could sing, "I laid me down and slept; I awaked; for Jehovah sustaineth me."

XXI

“LACKED YE ANYTHING?”

A YOUNG Englishman of twenty-two was invited to the home of a friend in Ireland, in order that the two might talk over a possible business partnership. When he arrived, he was warned to avoid an older brother, who would surely talk to him about his soul. The visitor did seek to avoid him, for his soul was the subject about which he wanted to talk least. But that very day he was drawn into the conversation he dreaded. He did not give the Christian brother the satisfaction of knowing it, but he carried away with him a most uncomfortable feeling about himself, as well as a feeling of wonder at the evident joy of the man who had spoken to him.

A few weeks later the impression was deepened by a call on a man in Belfast whom he sought for business reasons. He was on his guard against this man also, for he had been told that he was “one of these religious people.” But in spite of himself the personality of the Christian man charmed him.

As he saw more of the man and his Christian friends the impression deepened. As he watched their lives he heard God’s call to him to give his heart to Christ and become “a religious fanatic” himself. By this time, however, the religion of his friends did not seem fanaticism, but the most reasonable faith.

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Before long he was a regular attendant at a Bible class of five men which met in a private home. Gradually the band grew till the class more than doubled.

One desire that was ever in the hearts of the young men was that they might be guided to serve God in the way of his choosing. They sought his guidance, believing that he would give them some definite work to do for him, and that, when the time came, he would give them the faith to do his will; if need be, to go out, like Abraham, "not knowing whither" they went.

One February night in 1897 they were put to the test. God made it clear to them that he wanted them in the foreign-mission field. Before they separated they drew up and signed this declaration:

"Lord, I am at thy disposal for Foreign Missionary Work as soon as, and wherever, thou callest me."

In the following summer four of the young men decided to go to the Students' Conference at Curbar in Derbyshire, England. "We had a strong impression that the guidance to our sphere of labor was to be there revealed," one of the young men has written.¹ There they met a worker who had gone to the Conference in the belief that there God would open the way to find seven men who were needed for mission work in Egypt.

When the call was made known to the young men who were seeking guidance, they agreed to go, but said it was their conviction that they should go out in full dependence on God for support rather than in connection with any organized mission. Their earnestness

¹ George Swan, in "Lacked Ye Anything?"

"LACKED YE ANYTHING?"

and faith were so apparent that it seemed impossible to urge them to reconsider their decision.

The four men at Curbar prayed for the three men to complete the party. They intended to present the call at a gathering of the Bible-class band, believing that there the number would be made up to seven. But they did not need to wait till the meeting. That very summer one of the band, who had had no communication with the volunteers enlisted at Curbar, was visiting in Algeria, where he decided that God wanted him to become a missionary to the Mohammedans. "He felt, at the time, that this might lead to his separation from the rest of the band; but all was quite clear when he arrived home, and heard of God's dealings with the others."

Word soon came that the sixth member of the band had been led to decide that his duty lay in Mohammedan lands through reading the pamphlet, "A Challenge to Faith," which came into his hands in such a way that he saw God's leading very clearly.

The six men began to make ready for the trip to Egypt, for all agreed that they should begin work there. To be sure, the seventh volunteer had not yet offered himself, but they believed that God would send him in good time.

While they waited, prayed, and worked, a friend sought them and told them he thought they were making a mistake. Unable to convince them, he returned to his home. On the way a Christian man said to him, "I hear you are going with the little band of men to Egypt."

He could not forget the words. Soon he was won-

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dering if he ought not to go. Then he decided that if this was a call of God to him, some way would be shown him to arrange for the management of his business in time to join the band. This question came to him in a room where a roll of Scripture texts hung on the wall. Staring him in the face were the words, "Come unto me, and I will give you the good of the land of Egypt, and ye shall eat the fat of the land. Regard not your stuff, for the good of all the land of Egypt is yours."

It was enough. He hesitated no longer, but made known to the waiting six that he was ready to join them.

Without arranging for support, the young men went to Egypt. Work was begun in Alexandria in 1898. Later forces were divided and stations were opened in three villages and towns. Schools were opened and evangelistic work was conducted.

In 1900 it was decided to organize the mission. Accordingly a simple constitution was adopted, and a Home Council was arranged for in Belfast, which was to receive the gifts sent in for the work of the mission. Then there was a Field Council, which was to have charge of administration on the field. The name adopted at first was the Egypt Mission Band. Three years later this was changed to the Egypt General Mission. In general, the organization was patterned after that of the China Inland Mission.

The foundation principle of the organization was reaffirmed: the members trusted in the Lord directly to supply all needs. The method followed in carrying out this principle was thus explained by Mr. Swan:

"LACKED YE ANYTHING?"

"Every month we divide what God has sent in; first paying all fixed charges, such as rents, teachers, evangelists' and other helpers' wages, and all other current expenses; the balance is then distributed amongst the missionaries, giving each such a sum as will cover the necessities of life. If there is not sufficient to provide this sum, each abates proportionately. As a matter of fact, God has very often enabled the members of the Mission to live on much less than this amount, and in various ways, when he has seen his children needed more, he has sent it. Many times we have reconsidered this method of making the work, rather than the worker, a first charge on the mission funds. But, after considering it in all its bearings, it has always been unanimously decided to be the best working plan for us."

During the years since the organization of the Mission the work has prospered. Recruits have joined the original band, until there were, in 1913, thirty-four missionaries; schools have prospered; converts have been made, and always there has been enough to meet the needs of the stations. The workers rejoice to quote the words: "When I sent you forth without purse and without scrip, lacked ye anything? and they answered, nothing." That their faith in God has been justified one of their number testifies: "Although nearly every month, during fifteen years, has seen our general account exhausted, we have never once failed, or even been late, in meeting our liabilities. If at times the missionaries' allowances have been very short, God has always, in some way, met the actual need. Many can testify to the fact that, when allowances have

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made it impossible to buy very needful additions to the wardrobe, God has sent to them just the very garments they needed, and, besides, fitting excellently. Some one may remark, ‘But what a hand-to-mouth existence.’ Quite so, but there is no sordidness or grinding poverty in the existence when we fully realize that it is, as some one has said, ‘from God’s hand to our mouth.’ Is not the life of simple dependence after all the highest?

“Not only in the matter of finance, however, have we seen that God’s hand has been with us. Time after time we have found that choice of Mission premises has been made with more than human foresight, and our hearts have been filled with joy as we have watched railway developments, market, and town changes, etc., all making the sites year by year more valuable as Mission centers.”

The idea at the basis of the mission work is further explained in this way :

“One of the simple principles which we believe God gave us at the inception of the work was that it should be carried on in faith. No attempt was made to define what this meant or to expound its content. We believed we had been called of God to go forth to Egypt in childlike dependence on him for the supply of all our needs. We believed further that his provision would always be found alongside his plan, and at the back of our minds there was the conviction that the whole Church would be enriched, not by our faith but by his faithfulness. We had no one behind us but a few praying friends. We could therefore make full proof of the reality of God’s promises in regard to temporal supplies. It was quite clear to us that going into debt

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would be inconsistent with the Word of God. We could not therefore guarantee any fixed support, but we could undertake to use faithfully what he sent in, taking this as his provision for our need. As the work has grown the situation has become more complex, but the principle remains the same. We are not the agents of a Committee in England, but members of a Mission in Egypt, each pledged to look to the Lord direct for the supply of every need, and all bound together as a family, conscious of the responsibility of the family relationship. This is at any rate the ideal we have set before us, and in spite of many failures we are still seeking to realize the ideal."

One December there was need of £100 to close the year without debt. On December 31 the amount had not been received, and word was sent to the Home Council, "Keep praying that we may rejoice in hope. He has never failed us yet." On January 4 a lady brought to the Dublin office of the Mission £100 for the work, explaining that the Lord had told her a week before to give that amount. The gift was cabled to the field, and the workers rejoiced that the sum needed was provided "without any appeal save to the living God."

At one time the future of the work in Belbus was threatened by the reception of notice from the landlord to quit the premises. No other house could be secured. The Mission owned a lot, but there was no money for a building. Just then an Englishman came to Belbus, learned of the situation, and gave £600 for a building. Before the notice to quit expired, the new house was completed.

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A pleasing sequel to this incident is recorded. At the time the Englishman promised the money, he did not know just how he was to afford the expenditure. However, before leaving Egypt he received a letter from home which informed him that, owing to a mistake in the balance sheet of the firm of which he was a member, he was to be credited with £600 additional.

In June, 1908, on the last day when funds could go to the Mission from Dublin, and be received in time for the payment of the month's obligations, there was a very small amount in hand. A check for this was inclosed, but before the letter was mailed the Australian mail brought a draft for £150 and another for £12. It was thus possible to inclose everything that was needed. After telling of this response to the faith of God's servants, these sentences are added: "Now that letter from Queensland had been coming for six weeks. Who timed it to arrive just at that critical moment? Coincidence! The word is too long and the calculation on the basis of probabilities is too difficult. God! This is simple and satisfying."

At another time of great need, when funds were especially short, a company of the faithful men had been asking God for help. They were just separating for the night when the last mail was left at the door. The first letter opened contained a check for £120, forwarded by mail from the cable office, in accordance with a cablegram from Australia, fourteen thousand miles distant. Later it was learned that a giver in Australia had intended to send the amount by mail, but when he thought that six weeks would be required

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for the passage of the letter, he decided to adopt the quicker method, for fear the need might be immediate.

Of course the work has found many critics, but the arguments of many have been decisively answered by this statement made in one of the reports of the Mission's work:

"We are well aware that there are much more important matters in the working of a Missionary Society than finance, and the exercise of faith in God is by no means limited to the question of supply. We are also only too ready to admit that the expression, a 'Faith Mission,' is liable to be grievously misunderstood. It seems to imply that faith is the peculiar monopoly of the Mission we represent, and rather suggests that other missions, whose methods of working are different, are lacking in this essential qualification for any missionary work. These implications are far from our thoughts. All we desire to convey by the expression is a method of working, to which we have been specially called of God, a method whereby the missionaries themselves agree to assume the responsibility which generally falls on the Home Board or denomination, and which therefore brings them directly and specially into dependence upon God himself for the supply of their daily needs."

XXII

KEEP ON PRAYING

HOW the coming of sorrow and disappointment sometimes darkens faith! Yet this is the very time when the Christian most needs a strong faith that will enable him to cast all his care upon him who cares for his people.

Fortunate is that Christian who, when clouds are thick about him, and the lessons learned from Christ in the past need to be learned all over again, persists in taking all his doubts to God in prayer. Even if he doubts everything else, let him not doubt God; let him tell to God at all times his doubts and believe what he says to him as he throws himself upon the Father's care.

There are those who call themselves Christians who do not know what it means to take their doubts and fears and anxieties and lay them thus before the Lord. God asks them to do just this and he promises to give them the help they need. To those who are ready to do the best they can for themselves God is ready to give his blessing if they ask for it. As a godly man once said: "When I have done everything I can and see no clear way, I say to myself, 'God help me, I have brought out all my judgment, my brain can do no more, so it may please thee to give me a push,' for as soon as I ask for help, help comes."

KEEP ON PRAYING

This was Jesus' experience in Gethsemane. While he prayed the answer came, and thus was according to God's promise, "While they are yet speaking, I will hear." That promise is intended for everyone who calls upon God; God will just as surely answer us as he answered Jesus, if we come to him in faith. We ask that the tumult of our hearts may be quieted, and instantly, though we have been disturbed by many things, we are at peace. Strange thoughts of evil visit our minds; we ask for a vision of God that these may be banished, and at once the heavens are opened to our view. We are on the point of yielding to temptation; we ask for strength, and we feel that God's strong arms are underneath us. He does keep his word.

This thought of God's faithfulness to his promises strengthened Hezekiah when he took his perplexities to God in prayer. At the very beginning he showed the strength of his faith by speaking of God in some of the ways he knew him and thought of him. He thought of God as the God of armies; the God of his people, ready to fulfil the promise he had made to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob; the God of the temple in which Hezekiah was praying; the God of all men and nations; the God of creation and providence. What more did Hezekiah want? This was his God, and he cast all his care upon him.

What does God mean to us? The comfort and strength we gain from prayer will depend in part on the extent of our knowledge of God. Our knowledge of him must be strong enough to withstand the sneers of those who scoff at prayer. There are still those

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who like to taunt Christians by declaring that their faith is vain. God cannot give help, they say; they insist that we must just look out for ourselves. But as Napoleon learned his mistake in declaring that "God is always on the side of the biggest battalions," so will all those learn their error who do not trust God as able to help his people at all times.

The blind men who encountered Jesus on the Jericho road teach us a lesson of persistence in prayer in the face of insistent opposition. They knew what they wanted from Jesus, and they would not allow any outside clamor or any interference from others to come in the way of the presentation of their petition. They asked again and again till they had their desire.

Do we sometimes pray for a boon, only to have our thoughts turned aside from it because of some new interest? If it is worth while to pray, it is worth while to keep on praying.

XXIII

TRUSTING GOD FOR DAILY NEEDS

MARSHAL BROOMHALL¹ has given the testimonies of three missionaries of the China Inland Mission of God's care of them in the midst of difficulties and privations.

In 1868 George Duncan became a missionary in Nanking. "Moved with compassion by the sight of the city with its three or four hundred thousand inhabitants without a solitary witness for the Truth, he at once determined to live and labor there if so be that that was possible, and what might have appeared impossible to most was possible to him. The authorities, though professing friendship, yet, as has been so frequently the case, secretly sent orders to every householder and innkeeper not to receive him. Such a situation would have deterred most, but not so this noble-hearted, determined Scotsman.

"Situated in the heart of many cities in China is what is known as the Drum Tower, used among other things as a watchtower from which to give the alarm of fire or other dangers. George Duncan succeeded in making terms with the man in charge of this tower, and was allowed to sleep from sunset to sunrise in one of the upper rooms. Early every morning he had to roll up his bedding and leave. His meals he took at

¹ In "Faith and Facts."

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some city restaurant, very much devoid of those comforts associated with the name in this country, and his only resting-places during the day were the public tea-shops.

"What the hardships of such a lot were must be experienced to be appreciated. No place of privacy, no comfort, but only hardship, suspicion from morning to night. Yet the opportunity was welcomed and the gospel preached and tracts sold the whole day long. As the people became accustomed to his presence he was enabled to rent part of two rooms roughly partitioned off from the other part of a house, and rough as this accommodation was, it was too good to lose. But all the efforts of Mr. Duncan at Nanking and of Mr. Hudson Taylor at Hangchow, and a mutual friend at Shanghai, failed to discover any means of remitting money, and without this how could he hold on? Yet the poor foothold obtained was too valuable to sacrifice, and Mr. Duncan determined to hold on. Mr. Taylor urged him to come down to the coast for supplies, but he feared that, did he do so, he might altogether lose his hard-earned advantage. So he determined to stay and trust God."

The remainder of the story, so far as it relates to the supply of Mr. Duncan's needs, was quoted by Mr. Broomhall from the account of Hudson Taylor:

"I confess that I was not so happy as he was about this matter and found it more difficult to trust for him than he did for himself. Therefore, when for the last time the money I had sent off was returned to me, I felt sure he must be in want, and having no trustworthy messenger by whom I could send it, began

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very earnestly to pray for immediate help in this matter. Our little band of missionaries were scattered in opposite directions, but God brought one of them to Hangchow to consult about a matter of extension, and when he heard of Brother Duncan's circumstances, he agreed to postpone his own matters and take the money.

"After a few words of prayer, we sallied out together, found and came to terms with a boatman who wished to go to Nanking, and in a very short time I saw them start with a fair wind on their long journey of ten days or a fortnight. They were remarkably prospered on their way, to the surprise of the boatman, who remarked to his missionary passenger, Mr. Rudland, that his God must be the God of the winds, for whichever way the Grand Canal turned they had a fair wind! They therefore passed Suchow much sooner than they had expected, and made good progress until halfway between that city and Chinkiang, but on reaching the city of Changchow found to their dismay that the bank of the Canal had given way, that the water had flooded the lowlands in the neighborhood, and that they were unable to proceed. On asking the boatman what was to be done, he said that they might have to wait there a month, till the authorities repaired the banks of the Canal. This evidently would never do. Inquiries in the city elicited that there was a bridle-path through the fields, by which four days might be saved in the journey to Nanking. A donkey was hired, the journey was taken, and Nanking was reached several days sooner than it would have been had not the Canal been broken.

"But what had been Mr. Duncan's experiences?

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He had gone on quietly with his work, his Christian servant economizing as much as possible until the last coin was spent. After breakfast one morning the servant told him that there was nothing for dinner, and asked what was to be done. ‘Done?’ said Mr. Duncan. ‘We must trust the Lord and do good, so shall we dwell in the land, and verily we shall be fed.’ Taking up his handful of tracts and books he was about going forth to his day’s work, when his servant, with many apologies, asked him to accept as a gift from himself five dollars which he had saved from his wages, saying he knew he would not accept them as a loan, with his conscientious objection to being in debt. Mr. Duncan hesitated, and said to him, ‘Now, are you not really giving them to me as a loan after all? If you are saying to yourself, “Mr. Duncan’s remittances are sure to come to hand some day, and then he will doubtless give it back to me,” it really would become a loan, and to take it would be to live upon anticipated income. If I take it from you as a gift, I shall never return it to you whatever comes in; your reward shall be in heaven, not on earth.’ On being assured that the man wished it to be an offering to God, Mr. Duncan accepted it, and they lived on it together.

“Few men knew how to make money go farther than Mr. Duncan, and in this he was well seconded by his servant. Nevertheless, this money also came to an end, and again one morning after breakfast the servant repeated his question, ‘What is to be done?’ adding that his own wages were all spent, and that he was now as poor as his master. With the same encouragement to trust in God and go on with his work, Mr. Duncan

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took his books and went out for the day. In the course of that day, however, Mr. Rudland arrived with the money (to the great delight of the servant), and, learning their position, saw very clearly why the Canal bank had been allowed to break and his arrival had been hastened. As evening drew on the servant began to look down the long street, and when in the distance he recognized his weary master, he ran halfway down the street to meet him, saying, ‘It’s all right, sir, it’s all right; the dinner is ready. Mr. Rudland has come and brought the money.’ Putting his hand on the man’s shoulder, Mr. Duncan said, ‘Didn’t I tell you this morning that it was all right? It is always right to trust in the Lord and do good; so shall you dwell in the land, and verily you shall be fed.’

“ Soon after this Mr. Duncan succeeded in renting a comfortable house, and might perhaps have remained there in peace had not the occurrence of a fire next door drawn the attention of the authorities to him, who brought so much pressure to bear upon his second landlord that Mr. Duncan judged it wiser to retire to his humbler quarters; and months elapsed ere the house was finally secured in which he lived and labored till his return to England.”

G. Stott, one of the early missionaries in Wenchow, had this experience:

“ Once I fell very short of funds—in fact, so short that I had not a dollar in the house. I was without a dollar, I think, for twenty or twenty-one days—I forget which—and I had nearly twenty people in the house to feed. Now, how were they to be fed? I think this will be an illustration of God’s faithfulness to a poor,

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weak man. You know, I dare say, that it is also one of our principles never to incur debt. No matter what may come, we never will incur debt. My money was gone and my food also was nearly exhausted. Well, there was a man of whom I had bought rice several times; and he came to me one day and said, ‘Mr. Stott, how is it you have not been to order rice? Your rice must be out.’ I replied, ‘Well, the rice is nearly gone, but I cannot order any.’ ‘Why?’ said he. ‘Well, if you must know the reason, it is simply because I have not got the money to pay for it.’ Soon after that he sent me two loads of rice and 3,000 cash, equal in value to perhaps ten shillings or twelve shillings. Well, this rice also was done, and the money was spent; but still no help came. But when that was gone, he again supplied my need, and my tongue would fail to tell you the joy I had with God during those days. I shall remember, I think, as long as life or reason remains, how I sat sometimes for two hours together upon the floor of my bedroom and lifted up my heart to my God, and sometimes I felt almost like stretching out my hands to embrace my dear Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. I had some of the nearest approaches to God during those twenty or twenty-one days that I ever experienced in my life, and God kept me in perfect peace. I think I never doubted that help would come. Well, during the time that I was waiting upon God for that help, I received a letter from our friend Mr. Berger, informing me that a young friend, who was to become my wife, had already started from England, and perhaps by the time that I received the letter would be more than halfway to China. I dare

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say many would think that it was not a very bright prospect to get married on. Well, I found God faithful, for before she arrived I was delivered out of that trouble."

Dr. A. W. Douthwaite, who served as a medical missionary from 1874 to 1899, told a convincing story:

"When I was in the city of Wenchow, with two other families of our missionaries belonging to the C. I. M., we were a long time without a supply of funds. We had run very short of money, and as it drew towards Christmas time, we began to expect some from England, which was our usual source of supply. All the money was used up, but we said: 'The steamer will be in at Christmas, and then we shall surely get some more.' Christmas evening came, and with it the steamer, but not a cent of money for us. Our hopes seemed dashed to the ground. We had in our house just a little flour and some potatoes and a few other things. We knew that we could get no more money from our usual source for probably fifteen days, and our colleagues in the city were in just about the same fix. Just at this time I was subject to a little temptation, for I was offered a situation under the Chinese Government for £800 a year. This would have involved giving up missionary work, but God enabled me to resist this temptation. I am sure it was a temptation from the devil. It came just at the time when we were depressed and had been short of money for a long time; and probably had not my wife remained so stanch and firm and true, and so determined not to give up, I might have yielded. She would not think of such a thing. Well, as I said, the steamer came,

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and with it no money—nothing to encourage us at all. We went, as usual, and told the Lord all about it, for we went out to China knowing that we had only God to depend upon; and we were quite satisfied that that was enough for us, and we told our wants to him.

“Now you will see how that day the Lord, having shut up one source to try our faith, opened others. Before dinner time, a Chinaman came along with a large piece of beef, and said, ‘I want you to accept this as a present. I have received a great deal of medicine from you. You have done me good, and you would not take any money. Will you please take this?’ I took it, and thanked God for it. Soon afterwards, in came another Chinaman, a gentleman, with a coolie walking behind him with a large bamboo over his shoulder, and a basket hanging from each end. The man put the things down in the reception room, and I was asked to come down. I went down and opened the baskets and found in them four hams, and some little things besides. He said, ‘I want you to accept this as a present.’ The usual thing with a Chinaman is to expect you to take a little of what he brings and give him back the rest; but I saw that this man intended me to take all, and I did so, and thanked God for it. In came another Chinaman, with a fat pheasant and some chickens and a basket of eggs, and he asked me to accept these; I did accept them and thanked God for them. But that was not all. Before evening a European connected with the consular service came along, bringing with him a coolie carrying a huge turkey. He said, ‘See, I have been feeding this turkey for you for six months, will you accept it?’ You

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see that the Lord knew six months before that we were going to be short on that day, and he provided for us. Thus we had an abundance of food for the whole of us, although our usual supply was cut off. Several other things came in. A week or two before then I had my umbrella stolen, and during this day in comes a Chinaman with a foreign umbrella, a silk one. He said, ‘I have been to Shanghai, and I wanted to get a present for you, and I did not know what else to get, so I have brought this umbrella.’

“Towards evening I received a letter from the customhouse officers, saying that, as I had gratuitously attended to them in cases of sickness, they had subscribed to purchase a case of instruments for me, but not knowing what I wanted, would I kindly accept the money? Of course I kindly did. They sent with the letter a roll of seventy dollars. Our hearts were full of joy. We gave God thanks for all that he had done for us; and it is always a joy to me to look back upon that occasion and upon other similar occasions, and remember what God has done. ‘The young lions do lack and suffer hunger; but they that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing.’ I have proved that, and all who trust in him will also prove it.”

THE CALL AND THE RESPONSE

“ God never would send you the darkness
If he felt you could bear the light;
But you would not cling to his guiding hand
If the way were always bright;
And you would not care to walk by faith,
Could you always walk by sight.

“ ’Tis true he has many an anguish
For your sorrowful heart to bear,
And many a cruel thorn crown
For your tired heart to wear;
He knows how few could reach heaven at all
If Pain did not guide them there ”

XXIV

WHEN GOD SPEAKS TO US

YES, to us. He does not speak in precisely the same way as to the prophets of former days. That is unnecessary. We have the Bible, and he speaks to us through its pages.

You say you have never had a message from him?

Have you never—Bible in hand, prayerfully reading some passage to which you had come in course, or perhaps because the pages had opened to that place—had the knowledge that the message before you was for you, to supply some pressing need, to assure you of God's loving care, to turn you from sin, to lead you nearer your Lord?

When you have been upon your knees in prayer have you not sometimes had the feeling that God was present with you, or have you not had the answer to your petition for guidance and help in the remembrance of some word of Scripture which seemed to be the very thing you had desired? Have you not been reminded of some promise, some warning, some incident related in the Bible, of which you had not thought for years? Have you never been helped by the memory?

God pity you if you have not, and lead you to know that you have not been living up to your opportunities. God is waiting to speak to you. But to hear, you must listen. The still, small voice

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comes not often to those who are permitting their lives to be filled full of the clamor of the world and the turmoil of life. It does come often to those who, in the closet, or in the midst of their activities, turn their hearts upward, and see God by faith. To these God makes himself known; by these his voice is heard; and in their after lives they recall with joy the morning when, by his Word, he showed the way to escape temptation; or the night of darkness and despair when, by a whisper, he made the darkness light and the gloom radiant with his presence.

It was once a Christian's privilege to look into the Bible of one of God's children, in which he saw marks under certain passages. Dates were written in the margins. With reverence he turned the pages, for he knew he was looking on the spiritual diary of the owner of the Book. As he read he was able to guess something of the trials through which the owner of the Bible had lived, and the triumphs which he had achieved, by God's blessing.

A mark was under the passage: "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus." The date followed. The story was plain, of the days when a Christian doubted, perhaps because of renewed sin, or discouragement, or difficulty, until God spoke to him from his Word and sent peace to his heart, by the assurance of "no condemnation."

There was also a mark beneath the passage: "There is no fear in love; for perfect love casteth out fear." Then a date. The reader remembered nothing of that day. But the owner of that Bible probably remembers

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it as a day when, fearful of the outcome of certain events, he began to doubt God, until God assured him that "there is no fear in love."

Opposite the date November 26, 1895, was this passage, heavily underscored: "O give thanks unto the Lord, for his mercy endureth forever." At once the reader knew that the record was told of a Thanksgiving Day when the owner of that Bible was looking back over a year which had brought much of trouble, danger, or sorrow. The Lord had spoken to him in his need, and made his presence known. On the day set apart for praise and thanksgiving he was rejoicing.

The Bible was closed by the reader with the prayer that he might be more faithful and diligent in taking his wants, desires, and thanksgiving to God; that he might feel God's Word coming to him; that in future years he might be able to recall days in his life, not merely by saying, "On that day I had a disappointment," "On that day I lost a good position," "On that day I made a fortunate investment," but by saying, sometimes, "Then God spoke to me and gave me joy in sorrow;" "Then God answered a prayer;" "Then I had the assurance of God's presence as never before."

Have you had such red-letter days? Are they marked in your mind? Do you recall the history of promises, commands, directions, instructions, in God's Word, as you read these from day to day?

Does the Word of God come to you with the assurance that this particular message is for you at this very moment?

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God's people need to get into touch with him and his Word so that his messages will have a special meaning for them, and will transform their lives. Then will his Word be indeed a lamp to their feet, and a guide to their path.

XXV

THE ASSURANCE OF THINGS HOPED FOR

IT was the day of the great football game. The team was ready to do its best. But just as the men were about to go to the gridiron the head coach saw that several men were "panicky." So he found a moment to remind them of the glorious victories won in past years by famous players. He told them of the phenomenal run of one man, of the field goal kicked by another, of the half back who persisted in playing after several ribs had been broken. Then, seeing how the nervous players had regained control of themselves, he was ready to let them go into the field.

The author of the Epistle to the Hebrews knew that because of persecutions and hardships there was danger that many of the Christians would give up their faith in Christ and go back to Judaism. To save the day he reminded them of man after man who had been called on to endure far greater difficulties than they would have to face, yet they were strong to do and to dare because of their faith.

He told them that "faith is assurance of things hoped for, a conviction of things not seen." It was faith of that sort, in a man, of which a magazine writer has told thus:

"In Japan an aspiring youth can adopt some man

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of eminence as his father, and immemorial custom compels the person thus honored to take and care for the foundling, at least till he comes to the age of self-support. In 1896, the fame of William Jennings Bryan penetrated to the cherry groves of Japan and fired the ambition of a young student. ‘I have chosen you to be my father,’ he wrote, in effect, to the Nebraskan, ‘and I will sail at once for the United States.’ One morning Mr. Bryan, answering in person a ring at the door, was confronted by a trim Japanese boy, who remarked, with simple directness, ‘I have come.’ The lad was made welcome, and for five years was one of the family. He received the same education as Mr. Bryan’s own son, and then returned to Japan.”

God wants us to have faith like that in him. If we have, we can bear whatever comes to us. Of course, such faith may seem most unreasonable to those who do not know God. The faith of a mission worker in whose house there was nothing to eat and no money to buy anything would surely have seemed unreasonable to many, but that it seemed perfectly natural to him is evident from his own narrative: “Not long since my wife called me to the kitchen. ‘I have often heard you say one could put his head into an empty flour barrel and sing the doxology,’ she said. ‘Now, here is your chance.’ There was the empty flour barrel; I was not on a salary, and knew of no money that was coming in. I said, ‘I will put my head in and sing, on condition that you will put your head in with me.’ So we put our heads in and sang the long-meter doxology. Though no person knew of our need, the next day a groceryman called with a barrel of flour. Who sent it,

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or where it came from, we do not know to this day, save that we do know that our heavenly Father knew that we had need of these things."

The records of modern missions are crowded with just such stories of faith. Dr. Chamberlain told of the first convert in the Telugu country, a young man whose own father and mother were ready to murder him because he would not deny his faith in Christ. Finally he was decoyed away from his Christian friends and imprisoned. Furniture, clothing, and all food but a little rice and salt were taken from him, and he was told that he would never come out alive unless he denied Christ. But he would not yield. Every day he knelt in prayer. Finally he escaped. Then one came to the missionaries and asked to know the secret of the young man's endurance.

Such actions may seem unreasonable to those who do not know God. But it is the most reasonable thing in the world to those who have taken God at his word. They have proved him faithful.

XXVI

OBEDIENCE AND BLESSING

IN a tale of South American life I read a story of obedience, glad and hearty obedience, to the words of Christ.

A traveler was lost in Chile. After hours of wandering he was captured by Indians, who took him for a spy. His life was in danger. His captors were on the point of putting him to death, when suddenly all fell on their faces to the ground, then one by one they rose to their feet, mounted their horses, and rode away. The traveler was alone, and safe. But why?

He wandered on, in search of his companions. After dark he reached a cabin. He begged for shelter. But his reception was hostile. Food and a place to rest were refused, weapons were brandished, and he was glad to depart. But before he had gone many rods the weapons were thrown down, and the natives ran to him, embraced him, begged him to enter the hut, and receive the best they had.

The night was passed in safety. But the traveler could hardly sleep for curiosity. What was the cause of this second change in the attitude of foes, a change as sudden and mysterious as the first, when his life was saved?

Next day he went on his way. It was not long before he fell in once more with the Indians who, the

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day before, had threatened his life. Instead of meeting him with hostile demonstrations, they were ready to worship him. They loaded him with gifts; he could not carry them all, they were so many. He did not wish to take them, until he saw the happiness of each individual from whom he received a gift. A child offered him a fire opal, and as he took it from her hands, he was surprised to note the beatific expression of her face.

More curious than ever, he demanded an explanation. Then he learned the reason for the mysterious salvation from death, the cordial reception at the cabin, the loads of gifts. At the moment his life was sought, as at the moment of his turning away from the hut, the natives had heard a peculiar bird cry. According to their superstitious belief, this was the cry of a night bird which no one had ever seen, an angel bird sent by Christ. The bird's cry is the voice of Christ, and that cry will, on the instant, stop a battle, a dance, anything. It is a command, and must be obeyed. Furthermore, when the bird has called, it turns into a traveler, and the traveler is Christ. Whoever sees him must load him with gifts, and every gift will bring a blessing from heaven to the giver.

It is only a fable of the superstitious people of Chile. But what a commentary on the teaching of Christ, who says: "If ye love me, keep my commandments."

Obedience to the commands of Christ will cause a decided change in our lives. He may call on us to give up cherished plans, to surrender precious possessions, to endure discomfort, and even danger. But what of that? It should be enough for us that he commands.

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Let his command be obeyed as instantly, cheerfully, and completely as the ignorant Indians of the story obeyed what they took to be the voice of Christ, although that voice demanded hard things. Such obedience is as sure to bring a blessing to us as to those who, in the story, ministered to the needy traveler. In giving to him they believed they were ministering to Christ, at his bidding. We have the same opportunity of receiving blessing, for Christ has said: "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me."

XXVII

THE BIBLE A PERSONAL MESSAGE

ONE hundred and ten years ago a Scotch immigrant, a lad of twenty-one, was ending his first twenty-four hours in this country. During the day strange scenes and new faces had so held his attention that he had forgotten to be homesick. In the evening it was different. He was lonely, and sad, and discouraged. Most unexpectedly, however, his burdens were lightened, and his heart was filled with peace. Here is the story, as in the later years he told it himself:

"The first night I slept on shore was at No. 8 Dutch Street, in an old frame building with a shingled roof. The weather was very hot, and I slept in the garret, with the window open. About midnight it began to thunder and rain tremendously, the rattling of the heavy drops on the naked shingles, the constant blaze of lightning, the crashing roar of thunder, almost scared me to death. Before this I had never been twenty miles from the house in which I was born. In Scotland we have no shingle roofs, no thunder, no hot nights, no such heavy rain, no such blazing lightning, and no loud thunder. I wished myself home again. I slept no more that night, but kept tossing about on a straw bed, spread out on some Albany boards, till daylight. When I arose, not wishing to disturb the family at three o'clock, I thought to while away the

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time by opening my large case of books. They had been three months in the hold of the vessel, and I thought they might be mildewed. Having uncovered the case, on the top of the pile I found a small pocket Bible in two volumes. It was placed there by the hands of my father—my mother I never knew. I opened the book to see if it had sustained any damage. My eyes fell on the words, ‘My Son.’ I was thinking of my father. I read on with delight. Having finished the last verse I found I had been reading the third chapter of the Proverbs of Solomon. Get a Bible and read this chapter. Then suppose yourself in my situation—sore in body, sick at heart, and commencing life among a world of strangers, and say if words more suitable could be put together to fit my case. You may think as you please, but I looked upon it as a chart from Heaven, directing my course among the rocks, shoals, and storm of life. Its immediate effect was to raise my hopes, drive away my fears, and add strength to my soul. My sick head and sore bones were cured by the impression. I went forth with a light heart, to work my way through the world, resolved to keep this chapter as a pilot by my side.”

And the resolution was kept. Other chapters were read, and he was surprised to find that all of them contained messages for him. Then he made up his mind that he would take, not merely the one chapter, but the entire volume, as his pilot through life. He became a student of the Word, and was soon so thoroughly grounded in his faith and knowledge that when Thomas Paine, the atheist, attacked the Bible in his hearing, he was able to silence him effectually.

THE BIBLE A PERSONAL MESSAGE

There are lonely, homesick, discouraged people among us to-day who need to make the discovery which gladdened the heart of the Scotch lad on that stormy night in New York City. Strange that we are so slow to learn that there is a personal message for each one of us in the Book which we have been neglecting, and it is just the message which will meet our wants. The Author had our individual needs in mind when he inspired men to write the different parts of the volume. And the messages thus prepared will be understood by us if, before we read, and as we read, we ask the Holy Spirit to enable us to understand his mind and hear his voice speaking to us.

XXVIII

LIVING ON GOD'S WORD¹

LEONIDAS HUBBARD was the editor of a magazine devoted to outdoor life and sports. In the course of his work for his magazine he determined to organize an expedition into the interior of Labrador, that bleak, barren country which lies northeast of the American continent. Explorers have not yet been able to go far into the interior, so the country is practically uncharted. With two companions Mr. Hubbard started into this unknown interior. The party had to hurry, as the summer there is very short. They could not carry much food with them, so it was necessary to depend on the game and fish killed by the way.

Ordinarily the game would have been sufficient for their needs. But the year was unusual. Most of the game had been killed during a winter of great severity.

Moreover, they lost their way. Instead of taking a route which had been traversed by trappers before them they followed an unknown stream where food was scarcer than elsewhere.

Before they had been a month away from the coast they were in straits for food. Then they started to return. Sometimes fish were caught, but they were small and unsatisfying. Once in a while a few birds

¹ The story is told in "The Lure of the Labrador Wild," by Dillon Wallace.

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were bagged. Once, just once, a deer was killed. For the most of the homeward journey, however, they were almost entirely without food.

As they retraced their steps, they lived on remnants which they had thrown away as they marched inland. One day they found an old flour sack containing a little moldy flour. At another time they found a bit of mustard in a can. Again they found a lard pail which still held some lard.

During these days of privation two of the party had little better than the recollection of boyhood days on the farm, and the bountiful table which had always been ready for them there. But the third man, the editor, was a Christian. He had been accustomed to read God's Word. He had found delight in turning to one passage after another. These passages had been stored in his mind. They were ready for use in any time of need. As Joseph in Egypt stored up grain for use in time of famine, and as Job had stored up the words of God's mouth more than his necessary food, so Mr. Hubbard had stored up God's Word in his mind and heart. Now was his time of need. He was starving in body, but his soul did not have to starve. He had food for it. And in feeding his soul he forgot his bodily sufferings. He did not grow fretful and peevish; he grew more kindly, and thoughtful, and loving. He was feeding on God's Word.

One morning the three men found that they had a very small piece of bacon left. So they made some very thin bacon soup. There was not much strength in that soup, for on the previous day they had eaten three meals from soup made with the same piece of

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bacon. After breakfast two of the party turned away to prepare for the day, and to forget their hunger as best they could. But the Christian leader turned to the Bible. He read the Epistle to Philemon and several of the Psalms. He called his companions, and told them of his reading. His faith communicated itself to his comrades. They were helped. One of them wrote: "These readings brought with them feelings of indescribable comfort, and I fancy we all went to our blankets content."

Think of it! Content after a feast of bones which had been lying on the ground for weeks!

The seventeenth chapter of John was read on an evening when the only hope of the party lay in finding, next day, the head and hoofs of the one deer killed long before.

On another day, when they had been eating their moccasins, worn full of holes; when they had cracked the dry bones found before in search of a little marrow; when Mr. Hubbard had fallen by the wayside, unable to move for weakness, the words which fed them were those of Christ in the sixth chapter of Matthew: "Be not anxious, for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need."

Next day they killed a jaybird. It was their only food for twenty-four hours. But Mr. Hubbard read the fifteenth chapter of John. And as he read of abiding in Christ, he forgot the world and its sorrows.

At the end of another day of suffering, this was written by one of the party: "The day has been cold and damp. For supper we had a bunch of deer hide, and water from the much-boiled bones. As we reclined in

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the open front of the tent I again read from the Bible, and again a feeling of religious exaltation came over Mr. Hubbard." He said he was so happy. But his companions noted that his condition was pitiable. Yet he bore himself like a hero.

Next day he gave out completely. He urged his comrades to leave him, that they might seek their own safety. They agreed, hoping to return in three days with help from the coast. Before the separation Mr. Hubbard, too weak to read himself, asked to hear the thirteenth chapter of First Corinthians and the fourteenth chapter of John. So, thinking of the love which suffereth long, and the appeal, "let not your heart be troubled," he watched the others leave him.

We have the record of that last day written by his own hand, and found long afterwards by the rescuing party. He went within his tent. The fire died out for lack of fuel. He drew the flap and lay down thinking of the words: "Let not your heart be troubled; neither let it be afraid. I go to prepare a place for you. And I will come again and take you to myself."

The pencil dropped from his nerveless fingers. He fell asleep, to wake in the presence of God, where he would know no more of hunger or thirst; where there would be no more pain, but only the joy for which he had been getting ready on earth.

How fortunate Mr. Hubbard was! In the words of one who commented on this story of faith, food "could never have healed his spirit, nor cheered his sinking soul, nor given hope to his desponding mind, nor pointed him to the way of rest, nor given assurance

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of happiness beyond the grave." Food might have given him strength to get to his New York home. But he had something better: God's food, which gave him strength to go straight to his heavenly home. He had learned the lesson Christ taught when he said: "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God."

SEVEN
AS LITTLE CHILDREN

These lessons thou dost give
To teach me how to live,
To do, to bear,
To get, to share,
To work and play,
And trust alway.

—MALTBIE D. BABCOCK.

XXIX

WHY SHE WAS NOT AFRAID

THE hardest trials become easy to him who trusts in God. That sounds like a truism. Yet how many Christians there are who forget this truth when they most need to remember it! It would help such Christians to read of the experiences of a lonely immigrant who was able to write: "My hope that the Most High is leading me to that which he knows is best for me and pleasing to him grows stronger from day to day."

A little girl five years old taught a like lesson of trust to her father during a time of depression and doubt. One rainy evening, as he was about to go out on the street, he asked her to bring to him his overshoes. He wondered why she hesitated before starting to do as she was asked. The hesitation was over quickly and she was already on her way when he realized why she had waited. She was timid in the dark—and he had sent her to a distant part of the house!

His impulse was to call her back, but on second thought he decided to let her go ahead. Eagerly he awaited her return. His own heart was beating more quickly as he followed her in thought down the dark stairs, along the dark hall—he remembered then that the lamp on the newel post had not been lighted—through the dining room and the kitchen and out into

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the shed, then back again to the stairs and to the room where by this time he was pacing the floor in his anxiety for her.

At length he heard her step behind him. He almost feared to turn and look at her; probably she would be on the verge of tears.

But when he did see her face he was astonished. She was smiling! His surprise found expression:

“Why, little girl, I thought you were afraid in the dark!”

“Not now, father,” was the glad response. “I was afraid, once. But I cannot be afraid any more.”

“Why, little girl?”

“Because of a verse teacher gave me at Sunday school. I said it over Sunday night when I couldn’t sleep, and it was dark, and I felt like crying—like this: ‘I will both lay me down in peace and sleep, for thou, Lord, only keepest me in safety.’ I wasn’t afraid any more. To-night I didn’t need the first part, so I just said over the last bit, ‘For thou, Lord, only keepest me in safety!’ I said that all the way downstairs and all the way back.”

“And what did that mean to you, little girl?” her father asked.

“Why, father, it seemed to me just as if Jesus was holding my hand all the way, and you know I couldn’t be afraid then.”

XXX

A BOY'S LESSON

JOHN TIMOTHY STONE, D.D., told the author of this volume the following incident of his boyhood.

"Two of three ladies who were teachers in the primary and junior department of our Sunday school once asked me if I would go with them on a Sunday-school outing they were giving to the little children.

"We were to go in one of those old-fashioned carryalls that would hold about twenty adults, and we had about thirty or thirty-five children packed into that wagon. Every precaution had been taken in the selection of a driver, but still I felt somewhat uneasy, as the driver did not seem to be entirely himself. I asked to sit with him on the front seat, and soon discovered that he was under the influence of liquor.

"I made an excuse to stop at a certain store near by, at the top of a long hill, at the bottom of which we were to cross one of the busiest railroads in that part of New York State. I went into the store where I meant to get help. He agreed to wait until I returned. What was my surprise and alarm, upon coming out, to find that the team was going at full gallop down this hill, and to see in the distance an approaching train.

"It was impossible to hail the driver; it was impos-

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sible to stop him. The women and children knew nothing of the danger, and were rather enjoying the ride. I did not know what to do, so I went in the pasture, and kneeling under an apple tree, poured out my heart to God, asking him for his help and protection.

"A great sense of peace came over me at once. Then I hurried down the hill, thanking God for deliverance as I ran, for I felt sure that there would be no accident.

"And sure enough! the driver came to his senses, reined in the horses, and stopped at the bottom of the hill.

"There was no accident, but my lesson had been learned. I had realized, even as a boy, what faith and prayer will do, and that we have a right to leave a situation with God and trust him, after we have done our full part."

XXXI

THEIR SIMPLE FAITH

“IT seems to us that Korean Christians are more like the Christians of apostolic days than any other converts on the mission field,” a missionary who has spent her life in Korea has said; “they delight in the Bible, they are filled with the Holy Spirit, and they are men and women of sublime faith.”

Rev. E. Wade Koons¹ has told of a few of the converts whose lives bear testimony to the truth of this judgment.

One of these was Yi, and his story was told thus:

“In the winter of 1906-07 the churches in Korea were the scene of a remarkable revival. It took the form of an awakening among the Christians, rather than an increase in the number of those who were giving up their former heathen practices and coming into the church.

“Prayer meetings were held night after night, and many of the older members made public confession of grave faults and grievous sins. Many of these antedated the conversion of the perpetrators, and others were pride or anger or jealousy, which they would not have considered at all culpable in former days.

“Many of the men who made these confessions had to sell their houses or other property to make restitu-

¹ In “The Missionary Review of the World.”

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tion for wrongs that would never have been laid at their door but for these voluntary confessions, and more than one unbeliever was astonished to find himself the richer by several hundred dollars, the long-delayed results of some transaction of former years.

"At the Presbyterian Church in Chung Wha, a large town fifteen miles south of Pyeng Yang, there was a young man named Yi, who had for several years been a respected resident of the place and had joined the church some months before the revival began. No one knew much about him, and there was nothing against him, beyond the fact that he was a comparative stranger.

"One night he rose at the meeting and made a confession substantially as follows: 'Before I came here to live, I had been the worst kind of profligate, and after wasting all my own property, I turned to highway robbery as a way to eat and live. In a robber raid I killed a man of such and such a village so many years ago.' Naturally the village was much excited over the matter, and the news traveled as news can in the East, which had a 'wireless telegraph' ages before Marconi was born.

"The policemen at Whang Ju, the nearest city, thought they saw a chance to turn a penny for themselves, so came and arrested the young man, who disappointed them by saying philosophically, 'If I am to go to prison, prison is for me,' so in a little while they turned him loose in disgust. So much for the Korean police, but it was not long before the Japanese police heard of the matter, and Yi was informed that they were coming for him, and this time all his friends

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advised him to run away, but he refused to go, insisting that he had no other 'mind' than to take whatever punishment was coming to him, and in a little while he found himself in the 'Ka Mak So,' or common prison at Hai Ju, sentenced to fifteen years. For most men a sentence like this would be reason enough for black despair, if not for suicide.

"But Yi found that the gospel that had prompted the confession that brought him there, had power enough to comfort him, and while his old mother, who had followed him all the way from home, was managing, by day labor, when she could get work, and by begging, when there was no way to earn a little money, to get food enough for her son and herself (for the prisoners must in those days be fed by their friends or starve), he was preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ to the mixed and ever-changing population of the jail, and like another prisoner 'his bonds became manifest' through the whole province.

"His case was finally taken up by some friends among the leading men of the church, both Americans and Koreans. A petition stating the facts of the case, and emphasizing the voluntary nature of the confession, as well as the prisoner's good conduct in jail, was drawn up, and after it had been signed by those who were in a position to know about the matter, was presented to Chief Justice Watanabe, the head of the Japanese judiciary in Korea, himself an elder in the Presbyterian Church. He made a careful investigation, which resulted in the pardoning of Yi."

Another story of faith is that of the woman Sang, of Chai Kyung, who was a member of a little church

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whose members suffered severely from persecution. Men fell away from the church, and the building was about to be sold.

But Sang by faith saw the day when the little church would become a powerful witness for God in all that city. "She bought the building, occupying it as her own home, opened a school for boys, and finally arranged with a neighboring group of Christians to send a leader each Sunday to stimulate the few disciples whom she could bring together."

Some years later a mission station was opened at Chai Kyung. Sang rejoiced at the coming of the missionaries, and was glad to coöperate with them in the work of the church. Soon the thirty believers who had gathered around her became two hundred and fifty. Before she died the number was about six hundred. "She saw the building that she had bought and held for a church crowded with women, while the men stood outside in the freezing winter weather. She helped to build the new church, which was the largest building in the province." The ordinary Sunday congregation gathered in this building was seven hundred people or more.

In the winter of 1909-10, the Christians of Eul Yul decided to send two of their number to live in a heathen village, and work for the salvation of the people. Those chosen were Quam and his wife. Quam was an old man, an ignorant farmer, who for years had been acting pastor of the Eul Yul church.

When the opportunity was presented to him and to his wife, they did not find it difficult to decide. They knew that life would not be easy in the heathen village,

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which was seven miles from their own home. But, trusting God for the future, they packed up their worldly goods and went out to what must have seemed like exile.

Almost at once a few began to show an interest in the gospel. "At the end of the first year there was a congregation of twenty or more. At the end of the second year a few were ready to be taken in as catechumens, and a man and his wife came to Eul Yul to be baptized and received into the church. In the spring of 1912, when the missionary in charge went to visit the field, he found forty people ready to be examined, and he baptized thirty of them. In 1913 the congregation averaged nearly one hundred."

The island of Cho Do, ten miles off the Korean coast, did not have to wait for the coming of a missionary to hear the gospel. An old man, named O, was one of the few inhabitants of the island who found their way to the mainland. He heard of Jesus Christ and believed in him. At once he made up his mind that it was for him to tell his neighbors the good news. He was not dismayed by the size of his task, nor was he troubled at thought of the jeers of those who would not care for his message.

Wherever he went he invited his neighbors to become Christians. Some of them would go to his home to hear more of the gospel story. In time a little congregation gathered on Sunday to listen to his explanation of the Bible.

Before long his knowledge was exhausted. But he was not ready to tell the people he could give them no more help. He knew that on the mainland were mis-

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sionaries who would teach him. So he crossed over, and asked for admission to the primary school at the mission. There among the small boys—the old man sat on the floor and learned the truth for his people.

When spring came, he returned to the island, and once more he gathered the eager learners about him. In time several of them, who were men of greater intellectual power, advanced further than he in Christian knowledge and experience. Then he was content to let them take the lead, while once more he took the learner's place, rejoicing as he looked upon the company of believers who owed their coming out of darkness into light to his simple faith.

XXXII

FOUR CHRISTIANS WHO PRAYED

“ONE of the hardest tasks I ever performed was thrust upon me one night when I had to tell a mother that her daughter had been drowned,” was the word of a Christian man to friends who were talking of the test of faith. Then he explained that he dreaded a hysterical outcry.

But there was no need to fear for her. As she listened to the message, she burst into tears; then she fell on her knees and prayed in wondrous faith. First she thanked God for the years she and her daughter had spent together, and for all that those years had meant to her, and to their friends. Then she asked for strength to bear her loss in such a way that she might be a help and not a hindrance to others who knew sorrow and suffering.

“Never before did I so realize the strength of the Christian faith,” said the man who had dreaded to tell the news. “The reality of faith in God was impressed on me as never before.”

The story of another Christian’s prayer of faith was once told by Dr. A. T. Pierson:

“More than half a century ago George Müller began to pray for a group of friends. I asked Mr. Müller a short time before he died if he had asked anything of God that had not been granted, and he told me he

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had prayed sixty-two years, three months, five days, two hours—with his mathematical precision—for two men to be converted, and neither of them showed any signs of that happening. I said, ‘Do you expect God to convert them?’ ‘Certainly. Do you suppose that God would put upon his child for sixty-two years the burden of two souls if he had no purpose of their conversion?’ Shortly afterward he died, and I was preaching in his pulpit, in Bristol, and referred to this occurrence. As I was going out a lady said: ‘One of those men was my uncle, and he was converted, and died a few weeks ago.’ I understand that the other man was brought to Christ in Dublin.”

One whose faith has helped thousands has reported the case of the mother of four children who was suddenly bereft of her husband. She took up her burden with calmness and patience, toiling early and late that her children might obtain an education. A friend said to her one day, “Do you never get tired or discouraged?” “Oh, yes!” was the reply; “quite often, but when I think I can go no further, or do no more, I go and rest in my easy-chair.” “Easy-chair?” said her friend, looking around the bare room. “Yes,” said the woman, “would you like to see it? Come with me.” She led her into a small, scantily furnished bedroom, and, taking her by the hand, knelt by the bedside, and the toil-worn, burdened woman prayed as if she was face to face with God. Rising, she said, “Now I feel rested, and am ready for work again. Prayer is my easy-chair.”

There is no home so low or humble, no life so bare or destitute, but can have the easy-chair of prayer.

FOUR CHRISTIANS WHO PRAYED

The author of "A Struggle for a Soul" has told of a convert from Hindooism who early learned to have recourse to this easy-chair: She longed to spend a Sunday with other Christians in praise and prayer. But there were no other Christians in the village; and she felt sad and lonely. Moreover, all the villagers were going to their ordinary field work, and expected her to do the same. However, she resolved to keep that Sunday. Tying some cold rice in a bundle, and calling a neighbor's little daughter, she set out for a lonely place in the hills far away from the village. There she held services. She knew only two lyrics, but these she sang over and over again, and told the little girl with her the few stories she knew about Jesus, and in two or three broken sentences offered prayer. At midday they ate the cold rice and lay down to rest, then sang the lyrics again; and as the sun went down she returned to the village, her heart comforted and gladdened, she knew not how. "Where have you been all day?" asked the astonished neighbors. "It's the Christians' holy day," she replied; "we have been keeping it in the wilderness."

Those who sneer that faith is nonsense, that prayer is an empty form, can find no answer to testimonies like these.

XXXIII

A THANKFUL WOMAN

WHEN I first saw her, she was forlorn, discouraged, sad, and, if the truth must be told, dirty.

She lived in a two-room tenement in a back alley. The chance visitor climbed the outside stairs to her door with fear and trembling; he was sure the next step would bring the structure, and him, to the ground.

The interior was as forlorn as the housewife; a few broken bits of furniture, an old stove, a bare floor. Seven children, all under working age, found shelter there, and, the explanation of all the wretchedness, a drunken husband. The babe was too young to permit the mother to go out to wash, as she had been accustomed. With no outlook beyond the alley, is it strange if she was forlorn?

Then a Sunday-school teacher found his way into the room. He had places in his class for such likely boys as her three eldest. Would they come? They had been asked that question many times before and had scorned the invitation. But they took a fancy to this manly young fellow, and hunted him up.

Within a few weeks there was a transformation; clothes and shoes were brushed, after a fashion; and hands and faces were washed—that is, to definitely marked lines on wrists and neck.

Then the mother became interested and found the

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way to church. She kept on coming, went through the cleansing process, and united with the church.

The chance visitor to the home noted improvements. The floor was just as bare, but it was scrubbed. The furniture was still decrepit, but it seemed to have been (in some way) rejuvenated. Every inch of the two rooms was improved, though it would have been difficult to define the improvement.

The husband still drank. He abused wife and children for going to church. But somehow she was happy. The forlorn, discouraged look was a thing of the past.

She was found in the prayer meeting, as well as at the church services. While others took part, she listened attentively. Sometimes the leader thought she was about to speak, but each time reserve conquered, and she was silent. At length, after three years, when the pastor under whose ministry she had united with the church was about to leave, she felt she could not wait longer. It was his last prayer meeting. The testimonies had taken a thanksgiving turn when she saw her opportunity:

"I want to tell how happy I am, and how good God has been to me," she began. "We have a comfortable home, and clothing to keep us warm; my children have enough to eat and to drink; there is coal for the fire, and a little money for the church. I can't read, but I get to go to service, and God teaches me out of the Bible. Yes, he has been good to me."

As she ceased, her eyes were filled with tears. Many wept with her. How could they help it, when they knew what was back of the earnest testimony?

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Yes, she had a home—the home with the rickety stairs, paid for week after week by scrubbing brush and washboard, though she had little strength for the lightest tasks. The family had clothes—only the most wretched second-hand dealer would have looked at them. There were food and drink enough, in a way, for the children; not for herself. Coal—when she would gather it from the tracks, or could persuade the boys to find it for her. Church—paid for, frequently, by a knock-down blow if her lord and master chose to give it when she returned. Money for the offering—yes, sometimes all her living, given with the spirit which called forth the Lord's commendation of the widow.

There was silence for a space in that prayer-meeting room. Then, spontaneously, there was the sound of

“Praise God from whom all blessings flow;
Praise him all creatures here below;
Praise him, above, ye heavenly host;
Praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost.”

EIGHT
IN GOD'S KEEPING

“Not as I will!”—the sound grows sweet
Each time my lips the words repeat.
“Not as I will!”—the darkness feels
More safe than light when this thought steals
Like whispered voice to calm and bless
All unrest and all loneliness.
“Not as I will”—because the One
Who loved us first and best has gone
Before us on the road, and still
For us must all his love fulfill—
“Not as we will.”

—HELEN HUNT JACKSON.

XXXIV

THE GOOD HAND OF OUR GOD

BY the kindness of the king of Babylon, a company of captive Jews was permitted to return, under the guidance of Ezra, to their own city, Jerusalem, where they were to rebuild the temple and reestablish divine worship. Many were eager to take advantage of the offer. Life was easier, perhaps, in Babylon, but it was a foreign land, and they had not the opportunity to worship God as they were bidden, in his own temple. God can be worshiped anywhere, and some of the people realized this. Yet they longed for the city made sacred by many generations of seeking God there.

The king offered Ezra a guard of soldiers for the long desert journey. But Ezra would not take them; he preferred to teach the people by example that his dependence was on God, who would guide and protect those who believed in him. He said to the king, in answer to his offer, "The good hand of our God is upon all them for good that seek him."

Ezra had ground for his confidence. God had been with him and had blessed him. He was glad to give his testimony in gratitude for God's guidance and blessing.

Ezra was not the only one to testify in this way. Millions have testified. The Bible is full of the record, and each record throws new light on the words of

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Nehemiah: "The good hand of our God is upon all them for good that seek him."

Nehemiah spoke of God's hand as a powerful hand when he asked for God's blessing for his people "whom thou hast redeemed by thy power and by thy strong hand."

Jacob spoke of God's hand as a strengthening hand when he gave his dying blessing to his son Joseph. He mentioned the fact that Joseph had been in sore trouble, "but his bow abode in strength, and the arms of his hands were made strong by the mighty God of Jacob."

David thought of God's hand as an upholding hand. Speaking of the man who trusts in God, he said: "Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down; for the Lord upholdeth him with his hand." Again he prayed: "Thy right hand upholdeth me." God's people have the assurance of God himself that he will strengthen them. These are his words: "Fear thou not, for I am with thee; be not dismayed, for I am thy God; I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness."

Moses, in giving his farewell to the Israelites, whom he had led out of Egypt, said: "The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms."

The hand of God is a healing hand. When a leper came to Jesus, saying, "Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean," it is written, "And the Lord put forth his hand and healed him."

God's hand is a providing hand. One of the Jews wrote of God: "Thou openest thy hand and satisfiest

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the desire of every living creature." This was the experience of missionary fugitives in China in the days of the Boxer uprising. Stripped almost naked, the fugitives had escaped for the moment from the pursuing mob. "Worn out with all that we had already gone through that day, rain-bedraggled and oh! so hungry, our plight seemed more hopeless than ever. It was just now, when in some dejection we were wandering on to we knew not what of fresh buffetings and cruelty, that the Lord gave us another token that he was with us and tenderly caring for us. . . . Two men were seen coming over the field, and presently they called for us. Not knowing whether they were for or against us, Sheng-min answered the summons, and after a word with them bade us come. One of the two proved to be a gentleman from Lu-an city. With much compassion in his look and voice, he said: 'I am sorry for you. I would assist you, but am helpless to do so. Certain death awaits you; you cannot escape it. There are people there and there (pointing warningly) waiting to kill you. I would urge you, however, under any circumstances, to avoid the village before you. And yet I know,' he added, 'that you cannot go far without losing your lives. It is very, very hard for you,' and with that he handed me twenty-five cash, saying, 'Take this; it is all I have on me.' His companion then came forward, and, without saying more than 'K'o lien, k'o lien'—'I am so sorry for you'—thrust into my hand a tin of condensed milk which he had recovered from the plundered supply of our litters. What these words and acts of mercy meant to us at that juncture I cannot express. We were

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much moved. . . . Again and again we thanked our kind benefactors in the name of the Lord Jesus."

God's hand is still more—it is a defending and delivering hand. It gives physical deliverance. In the words of the Psalmist: "God brought Israel out from among them with a strong hand and with a stretched-out arm."

That God gives spiritual deliverance, David testified when he said, "Into thy hand I commit my spirit," while Isaiah said, "Behold the Lord's hand is not shortened that it cannot save."

This is an attractive picture, surely. And the best of it is everyone has the privilege of having the good hand of Ezra's God laid upon him, to strengthen, to uphold, to heal, to provide, to defend, to deliver.

XXXV

GOD IN OUR EVERYDAY LIFE

"**I**F all the reasoned arguments in support of Christianity were destroyed," says Robert E. Speer, "Peter Carter and the two or three men like him I have known would remain for me as its impregnable basis and defense."

The secret of Peter Carter's life was that he lived with God. He was on familiar terms with God. His face was always lighted up from within by the light of Christ. During his last days he was often heard murmuring, "My dear Lord Jesus! My dear Lord Jesus!" And they were very dear to one another.

His children loved him, for their instincts told them that he was one of God's friends. Once a visitor to a Sunday school asked the children if they knew who the Good Shepherd was. "Oh, yes!" they replied; "Mr. Peter Carter." And he was to them truly the representative of that Good Shepherd who took the lambs in his bosom.

There is no mystery about such a life. Its power came from abiding in God's presence. Mr. Carter was not content with visiting God now and then, but he sought him continually. He practiced the presence of God as faithfully as Brother Lawrence, the Carmelite monk in Paris, who said of his life: "The time of business does not with me differ from the time of

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prayer; and in the noise and clutter of my kitchen, while several persons are at the same time calling for different things, I possess God in as great tranquillity as if I were on my knees at the blessed sacrament." He asked God's help in every little thing, and help was never lacking. He did his work in God's presence.

Christians are accustomed to think of Bible reading and prayer as means of seeking God and learning to know him. But it is not easy to realize that the hours not devoted to these exercises may be spent with God just as surely.

"Some of my happiest moments of communion with my Father are the moments when I hold to a strap in the crowded street car or when I sit at my desk, with work crowding me hard," a busy man has said. He could understand the words of Brother Lawrence:

"It's a great delusion to think that the time of prayer should be different from other times. We are as strictly obliged to adhere to God by action in the time of action as by prayer in the time of prayer."

When the appointed time of prayer was past he turned to the business of the day and said to God: "O my God, since I must now, in obedience to thy commands, apply my mind to these outward things, I beseech thee to grant me thy grace to continue in thy presence."

The man who lives thus in the presence of God is safe from all danger. There is in the West a species of antelope that prepares a place for its young by springing into a thick clump of cactus and trampling down the plants in the center of the clump. There the young antelope is reared. No enemy can pass the

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barrier of cactus to reach the helpless fawn, though the mother can jump in and out at will. So God places his people who abide in him under his wings. He can reach them, but no enemy can come near. They are safe.

But does not evil sometimes come to the Christian? Does he not have sorrows and disappointments, anxieties and burdens? Then, what is the use of being God's man?

The answer is easy. Better is it to know misfortune and have God's help in it, than not to be unfortunate at all. Better to be afflicted and comforted by him than to be free from anxiety and pain and have nothing from God.

The Christian's blessing comes in the ability to take everything to God and in the realization that God is ready to help him at all times, for he says:

"He shall call upon me, and I will answer him;
I will be with him in trouble;
I will deliver him and honor him.
With long life will I satisfy him,
And show him my salvation."

XXXVI

GOD KNOWS

GOD knows our temptations. He understands exactly how hard it is for us to do what he asks of us. He does not expect impossibilities. "He knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust." The architect knows to an ounce just what every girder in the steel building can stand, and he apportions the loads accordingly. God knows what we can stand, if we trust in his strength and not in our own, and he permits no temptation to come to us that we cannot resist. His knowledge has been tested by his own experience, for Jesus was "in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin."

God knows our good points. There is no need to fear that he will not appreciate every evidence of desire to please him. This is a comfort when we are misunderstood by some of those about us. Christ said, when he saw Nathanael approaching him, "Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile!" He looked upon the rich young man and loved him, because he knew all that was good in him. Shall we not see to it that there is something worthy for God to see when he looks on us?

God knows our bad points, every one of them. It is of no use to hide them from him. We may succeed in deceiving others, but we cannot deceive God. To the woman of Samaria, Jesus revealed her inmost heart, so

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that in wonder she sought her friends, saying, "Come, see a man who told me all things that ever I did." The best thing for us to do is to submit ourselves to God's searching gaze, that he may tell us all that is wrong in our lives. The revelation must come before the cure.

To-day God uses his knowledge of the evil in our lives to warn us of our danger and call us to repentance. This was the meaning of his words to Cain, "Sin coucheth at the door," of his message to David, "Thou art the man," of Christ's words to Peter, "Satan asked to have you, that he may sift you as wheat." Blessed is that man who heeds the warning when it is given to-day, and by fleeing to Christ prepares himself for that time when God shall use his knowledge of the hearts of men to warn the unrepentant, "Depart from me, ye cursed."

God knows the disappointments that are in store for us, and he shows us how to avoid them. When Israel demanded a king, he warned them that a king would bring them sorrow, yet they persisted, saying, "Nay; but we will have a king." God tells us that the way to avoid disappointments is to give our lives into his charge, and let him do as he will with us.

God knows what we need before we ask him. Then why ask him for anything? Why not simply leave everything in his hands, confident that he will supply all our needs? Simply because this is not his wish. He says, "Ask and it shall be given you."

God knows us and he knows everything about us. Then what? Faith, of course, absolute, unquestioning faith. How wonderfully God blesses those who trust him fully!

XXXVII

IN UNEXPECTED WAYS

LONG years the people of Judah lived in captivity in Babylon, where they had been taken as a punishment for national and personal sin. Their hearts were sad as they thought of their own land and their longing to go back to it. But they began to fear that the day of return would never come, in spite of the fact that God had promised he would restore them to their own land.

But God is a God of love; he is ever mindful of his people. They were far from home, but he did not forget them. His enemies said he was a God powerful only in certain districts; that outside of the land by the Mediterranean his power was of no avail. But God showed that his people were not beyond the reach of his loving care. They were still within the circle of his hand, still upheld by his mighty arm. He remembered them and the days when they served him. He told them that even if he had forsaken them, or seemed to forsake them, it was only for a moment; that with loving-kindness he would draw them back to home and native land. God mindful of his own: that is the God presented to our view in this first chapter of Ezra, as he is presented to our view every day of our lives.

He had promised Abraham and Isaac and Jacob not to forsake their seed. He had promised David that

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the kingdom should continue. He had promised, and he would perform. The people had heard his word that he would restore them to their place; restored they should be, and that right speedily.

But, then, how would he do this? Cyrus was a powerful king. Yes, but God is King of kings. Not only is he powerful in the heavens, but upon the earth there is none who can stay his hand or say unto him, "What doest thou?" No one; not even the mighty king of Persia himself, who was feared for a thousand miles around, who had subdued provinces and kingdoms almost without number, who never thought of resistance being offered to his word! Cyrus was king, but God was King over Cyrus. Cyrus was powerful, but God was more powerful than he. And Cyrus was to do what God wanted him to do, just because God wanted him to do it.

With a God like that what reason had the banished Israelites for despair? With a God like this, what reason has any man to despair?

What an unlikely instrument Cyrus would have seemed for the deliverance of Israel! How many times the Israelites must have smiled as they read the prophecy in Isaiah which seemed to indicate that Cyrus would send them back home. "Some other Cyrus must be meant in the word of prophecy," they would say. "Surely not this haughty king whose lowest courtiers pass us with scorn, whose thoughts are never given to us, except to glory in our exile. Deliverance; yes, it may be, some day, but not by the hand of Cyrus."

Cyrus himself would have thought it unlikely—

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beforehand. Probably crushing the Israelites, punishing them, torturing them, would have been more to his way of thinking. But release them, help them home, assist them in rebuilding their ruined homes and capital—hardly that!

But all that seemed so unlikely came to pass. For God spoke to Cyrus, and Cyrus set himself to obey God's will. "The Lord stirred up the spirit of Cyrus."

Thus Cyrus, the haughty eastern monarch, Cyrus, the unlikely, became the ready instrument in God's hands for the doing of his will.

All honor to Cyrus. He might have resisted the Spirit of God when his spirit was stirred up. Men do resist God, to their sorrow. But Cyrus, stirred by the Spirit, turned to do the Lord's will.

God is never at a loss for some one to do his will. God's work is to be done. Men fret sometimes because they see it lag so; there is so much opposition. Wickedness seems triumphant. Christians are helpless, or think they are. "The world is going to the dogs," they say. The difficulty with them is that they are forgetting about God, who rules the affairs of all men.

God is mindful of the world's needs. He has promised; his promises are in his Word. Men must read them, believe them, must work and pray for their fulfillment, and the reward will come, the reward of those who seek the glory of the Lord. For God brings about glorious results in the most unexpected ways and from the most unlikely quarters.

Consciously or unconsciously, the world's leaders, as well as more obscure men and women, are assisting

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the progress of the gospel. Under secular auspices scientists go to the ruined cities of the East and discover long-buried proofs of the authenticity of statements in the Bible. Scoffers for years sneer at the Bible because it mentions a certain Roman governor who never ruled, they say. But a coin is dug from the dirt of a little Mediterranean isle, and lo! the picture and name of the governor appear as the Bible said.

So God uses the researches of the archeologist, the geologist, and the astronomer. His kingdom is hastened by the telegraph and the railway. These have been built for other purposes; God, the all-powerful, employs them for his ends.

As Cyrus seemed a most unlikely instrument for the restoration of the Jews, yet was used, so in the Middle Ages it seemed as though the Church of God was in danger of extinction through decay. But God used one of the most unlikely instruments to lead the battle against the vices which were sapping the life of his church.

So in every age, in every country, there are men—unlikely men, the world would say—who hear God's voice, then quietly go ahead and execute his commands. There was a John the Baptist in the days before Christ, there was a Paul in the days after Christ. There has been in our own time a Judson opening the way to heathen lands. But no one would have chosen these men for the work they did. There has been a Lincoln to emancipate the slaves, and a Grant to lead the Union armies to victory. There has been a Moody to inspire the Church and to lead thousands to the cross. Un-

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likely instruments, all of them, men would have said; but God thought otherwise.

He stirred their hearts to do his work, and to-day he is stirring the hearts of others.

Some resist, and their lives amount to little or nothing. Some try to follow where God leads. In proportion to their obedience, they are successful.

XXXVIII

THE SLEEPLESS WATCHER

A PICTURE popular in many homes represents a little child leaning over the brink of a precipice in the attempt to pick a flower. Hovering over him is the figure of an angel, watching him with hand outstretched, ready to pluck him out of the way of danger. That is a picture of God's dealings; he is the sleepless guardian of those who give themselves to him, for protection.

He will give his angels charge over thee,
To keep thee in all thy ways.

They shall bear thee up in their hands,
Lest thou dash thy foot against a stone.

Dangers come to those who trust God, as to all men. But they are not overwhelmed. Deliverance is given to them from their troubles. It is impossible for disaster to overtake the children of the ever-watching God. Disasters may come, but they are not real disasters; blessing will come out of them, for God has promised.

A rebuke was given to those who complain because of their hard lot in life when, in a daily newspaper, a letter was printed from a woman who had gone to work in a factory when she was thirteen years old. After a few years she married. Soon after, her husband contracted con-

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sumption, and the burden of the family's support was thrown on her. Because of rheumatism, she had to work with her right hand bandaged, then with both hands bandaged, and she could only crawl to her work. The husband died. Abscesses on the hand compelled the widow to relinquish work. Hand and foot had to be operated on; part of one foot and all of the right hand were taken away. She learned to write with her left hand. Her old employer kept her at work.

And she wrote—to complain? No; to tell how happy she was. But how could she be happy? Let her tell her own secret:

"Happiness, I knew, must come from within. If I had not physical charms, I could at least be sweet and gentle. It is not for me to tell you how I have succeeded, but I do know that I am not unhappy. My great ambition is to keep this little home over our heads. It is a struggle, I will admit; but, oh, what a satisfaction to know one is conquering! If I wished, I could worry over the fact that old age will be creeping on and nothing laid by, but I run away from such thoughts and leave it with God. . . . Oh, I could not be unhappy when God gives me these beautiful seasons to enjoy, and a few friends who make me feel that I am of some use! Nature and books and nature in books are my greatest pleasure."

NINE
IN TIME OF TRIAL

“ Though we pass through tribulation,
 All will be well;
Ours is such a full salvation,
 All, all is well!
Happy still in God confiding,
Fruitful, if in Christ abiding,
Holy, through the Spirit’s guiding,
 All must be well.

“ We expect a bright to-morrow,
 All will be well;
Faith can sing through days of sorrow,
 All, all is well!
On our Father’s love relying,
Jesus every need supplying,
Or in living, or in dying,
 All must be well.”

XXXIX

FAITH AND MEANS

SOMETIMES what is called faith is merely presumptuous folly, the folly of which Jesus refused to be guilty when he was tempted to cast himself from the pinnacle of the temple, in dependence on the promise, “He shall give his angels charge concerning thee . . . on their hands they shall bear thee up, lest haply thou dash thy foot against a stone.” Jesus told the tempter deliberately to throw himself in the way of danger, at the same time expecting the fulfillment of the promise, would be making trial of God.

J. Hudson Taylor¹ has told how he learned this lesson during his first voyage to China on the *Dumfries*, which sailed from the home port on September 19, 1853. From the beginning the voyage was trying. He said:

“We had scarcely left the Mersey when a violent equinoctial gale caught us, and for twelve days we were beating backwards and forwards in the Irish Channel, unable to get out to sea. The gale steadily increased, and after almost a week we lay to for a time; but drifting on a lee coast, we were compelled again to make sail, and endeavored to beat off to windward. The utmost efforts of the captain and crew, however, were unavailing; and the night of Sunday, September

¹ In “A Retrospect.”

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25, found us drifting into Carnarvon Bay, each tack becoming shorter, until at last we were within a stone's throw of the rocks. About this time, as the ship, which had refused to stay, was put round in the other direction, the Christian captain said to me, 'We cannot live half an hour now: what of your call to labor for the Lord in China?' I had previously passed through a time of much conflict, but that was over, and it was a great joy to feel and to tell him that I would not for any consideration be in any other position; that I strongly expected to reach China; but that, if otherwise, at any rate the Master would say it was well that I was found seeking to obey his command.

"Within a few minutes after wearing ship the captain walked up to the compass, and said to me, 'The wind has freed two points; we shall be able to beat out of the bay.' And so we did. The bowsprit was sprung and the vessel seriously strained; but in a few days we got out to sea, and the necessary repairs were so thoroughly effected on board that our journey to China was in due time satisfactorily accomplished.

"One thing was a great trouble to me that night. I was a very young believer, and had not sufficient faith in God to see him in and through the use of means. I had felt it a duty to comply with the earnest wish of my beloved and honored mother, and for her sake to procure a swimming-belt. But in my own soul I felt as if I could not simply trust in God while I had this swimming-belt; and my heart had no rest until on that night, after all hope of being saved was gone, I had given it away. Then I had perfect peace; and, strange to say, put several light things together, likely to float

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at the time we struck, without any thought of inconsistency or scruple. Ever since, I have seen clearly the mistake I made—a mistake that is very common in these days, when erroneous teaching on faith-healing does much harm, misleading some as to the purposes of God, shaking the faith of others, and distressing the minds of many. The use of means ought not to lessen our faith in God; and our faith in God ought not to hinder our using whatever means he has given us for the accomplishment of his own purposes.

“For years after this I always took a swimming-belt with me, and never had any trouble about it; for after the storm was over, the question was settled for me, through the prayerful study of the Scriptures. God gave me then to see my mistake, probably to deliver me from a great deal of trouble on similar questions now so constantly raised. When in medical or surgical charge of any case, I have never thought of neglecting to ask God’s guidance and blessing in the use of appropriate means, nor yet of omitting to give him thanks for answered prayer and restored health. But to me it would appear as presumptuous and wrong to neglect the use of those measures which he himself has put within our reach as to neglect to take daily food, and suppose that life and health might be maintained by prayer alone.”

XL

PROVING THEIR FAITH

AN Eastern monarch made a most unreasonable demand of a neighboring king, and boasted of the terrible punishment he would visit upon the neighbor if his wishes were not gratified. But the neighbor returned a message of defiance: "Let not him that girdeth on his armor boast himself as he that putteth it off." Or, as the words have been paraphrased, "The time to crow and flap your wings is after you have fought."

Always there are people who need to learn that it is one thing to utter loud boasts, and an entirely different thing to carry them out. Peter was eager to give protestations of loyalty to Christ, but when he was put to the test he failed miserably. John Mark started out confidently in his missionary labor with Paul, but when difficulties beset him, he turned back, discouraged. "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall," is the warning word.

No one has greater need to keep that warning in mind than the Christian who tells what he thinks he would do in time of disaster. Perhaps he believes his faith would be strong enough to bear him up under any conceivable difficulty, and so does not hesitate to say so. Yet many Christians have found it easier to make

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high-sounding phrases, when all is going well, than to live in accordance with these when things go wrong.

It is helpful to read of a recent instance when faith, put to a severe test, stood firm.

In March, 1914, there was joy among the students of Wellesley College because the team which represented the institution in an intercollegiate debate had been victorious. On Monday morning, March 16, during an address in Chapel, President Pendleton referred to the event. After congratulating the students on the result of the contest, she said:

"It is a fine thing to be enthusiastic over victory; it is a better thing to learn enthusiasm from defeat."

Early next morning the alarm of fire sounded. The main building of the college was burning! Quickly scores of students made their way to safety. No one was able to save anything but the clothes hastily thrown on. For an hour or more they gazed as the great building was destroyed.

Now note how well teachers and students stood the test of faith. Three hours after the alarm of fire they gathered for the morning chapel service. One who was there says there were "no tears, no nervous whisperings, nothing to show what a terrible ordeal some of the worshipers had survived. A serene gravity and quiet marked the attitude of all present. The choir, many of whom had, only three hours earlier, escaped from the burning building, marched up the aisle singing,

"O God, our help in ages past."

After the responsive reading of Psalm 91, beginning, "He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High

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shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty," Miss Pendleton read a brief passage from the end of the eighth chapter of Romans, concluding in a voice of unforgettable exaltation, "For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus, our Lord." Then she announced that the spring term would begin at the time already set, April 7, and charged all students to register in the Library by one o'clock that day. Nothing could have been a better challenge to college loyalty. Instead of yielding to discouragement and despair, she made her hearers feel that there was work to do, and that the first duty of all was to rally undaunted to support academic life, allowing no obstacle to stand in the way of completing the college year. After singing

"Who trusts in God, a strong abode
In heaven and earth possesses,"

the choir marched out, the college dispersed quietly, and plans were begun for meeting the most momentous crisis in the history of the college.

A professor of philosophy who lost everything in the fire spoke a challenge that showed the reality of her own faith. She said: "I have spent all my life teaching people that the things that are seen are temporal, and now we have the chance of our lives to prove that the things that are unseen are eternal."

That was like the faith of Job, who, when he lost everything he possessed, said: "The Lord gave and the

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Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord." It was like the faith of Sir Walter Scott, who, on January 21, 1826, after hearing of the failure of his publishers, wrote: "Things are so much worse than I apprehended that I shall neither save Abbotsford nor anything else. Naked we entered the world and naked we leave it. Blessed be the name of the Lord." Commenting on this entry, his biographer wrote: "The sentiments of resignation and of cheerful acquiescence in the dispensations of the Almighty which he expressed were those of a Christian thankful for the blessings left, and willing, without ostentation, to do his best. It was really beautiful to see the workings of a strong and upright mind under the first lash of adversity, calmly reposing upon the consolation offered by his own integrity and manful purposes."

There is so much inspiration in reading of faith like this that we pity the people who, like Charlotte Brontë's Ginevra Fanshawe, have "an entire uncapacity to endure"; who "seem to sour in adversity." Miss Brontë suggests that a man who takes such a woman for his wife "ought to be prepared to guarantee an existence all sunshine."

A guarantee like that is as impossible as it would be unwise, except as the guarantee is given by him who teaches his people, "He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty," and so enables them to say, "Though I walk in the midst of trouble, thou wilt revive me." To them life is always sunshine because they always see the light of God's countenance.

XLI

WHEN GATES WERE CLOSED

IN 1894 Mr. and Mrs. H. F. Ridley and a Mr. Hall were doing evangelistic work for the China Inland Mission in Sining, a city on the borders of Kokonor, and far on the way to Tibet. They worked for twelve months in peace. Then, during a Mohammedan rising, siege was laid to the city.

Before the gates were closed, the missionaries thought of fleeing to their friends in a distant city. They knew that to stay and face a siege was a terrible outlook, and that if the city should fall into the hands of the rebels the consequences would be even more dreadful.

But "after earnest prayer to God for guidance, God showed them what he would have them do, and he graciously took out of their hearts any fear in doing it."¹

"By this time the city gates were closed and letters could neither be sent nor received. For long weary months Hudson Taylor and others at the coast waited eagerly for tidings and for some opportunity of sending supplies. Of this time Mr. Taylor subsequently said: 'It was a time of great suspense and of much prayer. We did rest in the Lord and knew that he was doing the best thing, but we felt a very great responsibility to be instant in prayer for these dear mis-

¹ Told in "Faith and Facts."

WHEN GATES WERE CLOSED

sionaries, for we knew not what their necessities or their straits might be at any given time. We only knew that they were alive by one thing, and that was that the Holy Spirit led us to constant prayer for them, and we were sure that the Spirit of God never taught anyone to pray for the dead.'

"While friends outside the city were thus interceding on their behalf, the little band within the city were daily casting their care upon God and finding that he cared for them. Their money came to an end, and their little stock of supplies came to an end, but, to quote again Mr. Taylor, 'God had not come to an end, and here is the beauty of the principle upon which we rest—the faithfulness of God.' There was plenty of money for them at the coast, and some was sent, but it never reached them. For five and a half months they had not so much as any communication even with the nearest mission station, and no letters or supplies could reach them for nine months. But God was with them, close at hand, and he provided for all their need, and probably during those terrible months they were enabled to do more for the glory of God, and more to teach the people that there was a living God, than many years of ordinary service would have accomplished. Let us see how their time was spent and how God provided.

"Some ten days after the rebellion had broken out in the city neighborhood a poor old beggar came to the door. He had a sore leg and he asked for medicine, that he might get it healed. When tending the old man he said, 'Don't you think you might go down and do a little good to some of the poor wounded peo-

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ple lying in the temple of the god of literature?' As the workers had been seeking for guidance as to the best work to do, they thought this might be a call. Ordinary preaching to the people was out of the question, and the street chapel had had to be shut, but it might be possible to help the sick and wounded. So down they went to the temple, and such a sight met their eyes as they had never expected to see.

"Here were one hundred and twenty poor people in the most abject state of need; men, women, and children who had been lashed, cut, and lacerated by the rebels, and who had in that most pitiable condition dragged themselves some eighteen or twenty miles to this poor place of shelter. The majority of them had been from eight to ten days on the road. To stop the flowing of their blood the poor people had plastered themselves with mud, with such results as can be more easily imagined than described. As it was already dusk and no artificial light was possible, there was nothing for it but to return to the mission house and make such preparations as were possible, and then wait until the morning.

"The morning came, and away Messrs. Hall and Ridley went. But the real condition of the sufferers was worse than had been imagined, the dusk of the night before having made a thorough examination impossible. With wounds undressed for days and even weeks, and huddled together with not even the most elementary provision for sanitary arrangements, the condition of the poor people was repulsive in the extreme. Even the Chinese, who are strangely unaffected by sights and smells which almost overcome

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the European, stood at a distance, and would not come near, and the Chinese doctors with their wide sleeves placed over mouth and nose would not give help in any way.

"While the abject needs of the people appealed to all that was sympathetic in the missionaries, yet the conditions were such as to make them almost physically unable to help through sheer sickness and revulsion. They felt that they needed special strength from God for such work and for this they looked not in vain. Strength was given in answer to prayer, and for a long time loving care was bestowed upon them with the gratifying result that nearly every one recovered. Though not able to preach to them in words they preached in deeds.

"Later on another company of some two hundred wounded entered the city, and these were cared for in the same way, and during the nine months as many as two thousand sick and wounded passed through their hands. The medical and surgical appliances were ill adapted to such work, but with poor instruments good results were obtained. During that time some forty bullets alone were extracted, some by Mr. Ridley, with no better instruments than a razor and a pocketknife, and although unskilled at such work, through the goodness of God no life was lost through the cutting of an artery.

"It is not easy to depict the horrors of these days. The streets of the city became veritable dung-heaps, with thousands of poor people huddled together like pigs in a sty. More than a thousand patients suffering from diphtheria came for treatment to the 'Gospel

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Hall'—the name of which the people changed to 'Salvation Hall,' so many lives having been saved. Such a heavy demand upon the limited medicine chest was a serious matter. After some eight pounds of sulphur had been exhausted in treating the throats of the diphtheria patients, alum was used, then borax. For wounds, beeswax, resin, lard, borax, and zinc were resorted to; three hundred and fifty feet of calico were used by October and many pounds of cotton. Oil had risen from forty-three cash per pound to over two hundred, and coal had run short, with a temperature down to zero and many of the poor destitute of their clothing, which had been either stolen or burned by the rebels. The missionaries had to cook their bread with dried manure.

"And now about the middle of September the food-supply began to run short. Busy from sunrise to dusk caring for the sick, they had hardly noticed the emptying larder. And now all the grain shops in the city were closed, for the city was getting into the straits of a prolonged siege, and grain could not be bought on the streets. And so they took this matter to the Lord, knowing that he who had led them to stay in the city would also provide for them, and the text, 'Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you,' came forcibly home to their minds.

"Having very definitely committed the matter to the Lord, they went on with their work among the wounded, believing in the word, 'Trust in the Lord and do good, and so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed.' A few days afterward, when

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only two or three pounds of flour were left at the bottom of the barrel, an official came down from his post on the wall to thank them for what they were doing for the wounded. As the very servants had gone to join the volunteers in the defense of the city, the Ridleys had no servant, and as it is customary to give tea to any guest who calls, Mr. Ridley prepared and served the tea himself. This fact was not lost upon the official, who, however, said nothing but reported it to the Prefect. Next morning they were invited to visit the official on the city wall. They responded and went, and during the visit the official remarked, 'Yesterday, when I was at your house, I noticed that you had no servant. The Prefect has told me to lend you four soldiers to help you.'

"This was an unexpected kindness, but such help would rather be an anxiety than otherwise with only two or three pounds of flour in the house, and so, while thanking the official most cordially, they declined the offer. However, he sent for two, who came and saluted the missionaries. 'Now,' he said, 'take these two with you.' Feeling that it was best to be frank with the man rather than perplex him by again declining his offer without an explanation, they said, 'If you really want to know why we do not accept your offer, it is because we cannot feed the men.' He replied, 'Of course you cannot have them if you have no food for them,' and there the matter was allowed to drop and the visitors returned home.

"The next morning when they were as usual attending to the wounded, two soldiers appeared at the door, each man carrying on his back a big sack of grain of

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about one hundred pounds' weight. 'We were not surprised,' related Mr. Ridley subsequently, 'for we knew that God would supply our needs.' Later on another two soldiers appeared with similar loads, while two or three days later the Prefect's secretary called and said, 'The Prefect will be very glad to send you a tan (equal to six hundred pounds) of grain,' and in fulfillment of this promise six soldiers shortly appeared, each laden with a sack of grain, and thus was sufficient grain supplied, not only to last until the rebellion was quelled, but for six months more. And not only was grain supplied, but a supply of coal was also sent, with an offer to supply anything else they might want, if only they would make their wants known and the city could furnish the needed articles.

"The Prefect of the city, who had personally visited the temple of the god of literature several times, that he might see the good work the missionaries were doing, was probably the prime mover in this kindness, but his heart was doubtless stirred by him who holds the hearts of all men in his hands. The workers had trusted in the Lord, and had sought to do good, and they experienced the fulfillment of the promise to the very letter, 'So shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed.' "

XLII

ALONE, YET NOT ALONE

"YOU must not think of taking such a dangerous journey!" American friends said to Mrs. Petrus Rijnhart when, in 1894, she told them of her plans to follow her husband into the hidden recesses of the mountains of Tibet, the closed land of Asia. "You say yourself that only half a dozen travelers have ever dared to make the trip. Why should you go where hardy men have feared to venture?"

But women often venture where men fear to go, if they have sufficient reason. To Mrs. Rijnhart the reason for the Tibet expedition seemed so commanding that she did not hesitate. Was not her husband going? And did he not need her counsel and help? He was one of the few men who had been to Tibet. During his short experience there he had learned how eager some of the Tibetans were to hear what he had to say about the religion that was making the Western world great. When he returned home there rang insistently in his ears the question put to him by a Tibetan, "If what you say is true, why have you waited so many moons to tell us?"

And when he told Mrs. Rijnhart that duty called him to the lonely plateaus to the east of China, her only answer was, "I will go with you."

He told her of the difficulties of the way, but she

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was unmoved. He reminded her that stern spies were ever watching for disguised foreigners who tried to penetrate toward the mysterious city of Lhasa, and that many of these had been conducted to the Chinese border, with the warning not to return, but her purpose was unchanged.

So, full of hope, husband and wife set out on their venture. Across the Pacific they went, then up the great Yangtse by steamer and houseboat, then hundred of miles by jolting mule carts over typical Chinese roads, in which the travel of centuries had worn grooves sometimes two feet deep.

On the border of Tibet they paused for several years at a little village of mud-brick houses. There they became acquainted with the people who were constantly coming from Tibet, and gained some knowledge of the country to which they were bound.

The difficulties of the journey were set before Mrs. Rijnhart more plainly than ever, but she was eager to push on to the only city in the world absolutely closed to Westerners. Tales of rough mountain passes, raging rivers, arid wastes, death-dealing winds and fierce bands of robbers were powerless to keep her from what she had made up her mind was her duty.

At last the journey was continued. Early one morning in May, 1898, Mr. and Mrs. Rijnhart, with their one-year-old son, born in China, set out at the head of a picturesque caravan of seventeen ponies. Three servants were taken with them, as well as supplies of native food sufficient for two years.

For a month all went well. The natives were friendly, and the only robbers seen were easily fright-

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ened away. The birthday of the little son was celebrated with great festivity. While the child played near the tent, the happy father and mother, after the manner of parents, talked over dreams of the future, when the boy would be a useful man.

But those dreams were never to be fulfilled. Only a few days later the baby suddenly passed away. With the help of his servant (two of the men had fled, for fear of robbers) Mr. Rijnhart dug a little grave, and the soil of Tibet was consecrated as it received the form of its first Christian child.

At once the parents were compelled to leave the resting place of their babe. As long as she could see the little mound of stones built above the grave, the sorrowing mother looked back. Then, resolutely quieting her heart, she turned her face toward Lhasa, now only one hundred and fifty miles away, prepared for whatever awaited her on the journey. She was soon to find that her real sufferings and hardships were hardly begun.

The pilgrims were congratulating themselves that no one had appeared to dispute their passage, when a company of spies from Lhasa ordered them to retrace their steps, and put them in charge of guides, who were instructed to stay with them till they were safely over the border in China. Their one servant now left them to the tender mercies of the strangers.

Very soon the travelers realized that they were in the hands of irresponsible men. Rumors of robber bands disquieted them, but for two weeks no robbers were seen. Then, when the party was in camp on the bank of a swift stream, there was an attack from

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ambush, and several horses were killed. The rascally guides seized all but one of the remaining horses and hurried off.

The plight of the travelers was pitiable. They were alone in a strange country, surrounded by enemies, snow was on the ground, and the road was almost impassable. They struggled on along the river, and next day saw some tents on the opposite bank. Mr. Rijnhart, determining to go over in search of help, started into the water, turned as though seeing a better place to cross, passed around a point of rocks, and was gone.

Two hours passed, and he did not return. At length the sun set; still there was no sign of any living creature except four bears gamboling in the snow on the hillside. The long hours of darkness seemed endless, but at last the morning came; then the lonely woman realized that she would probably never see her husband again. Reluctantly she concluded that he had fallen a prey to the robbers, to whose tender mercies they had been deserted by the rascally guides.

But her faith did not fail. "Well it was," she wrote, in telling the story,¹ "that we had learned to trust God in hard and difficult places. What else supported me through the leaden hours of that day but the thought that I was in God's hands?

"Nothing before, nothing behind,
The steps of faith
Fall on the seeming void, and find
The rock beneath."

"But I must admit it was a faith amidst a darkness so thick and black that I could not enjoy the sun-

¹ In "With the Tibetans in Tent and Temple."

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shine. . . . Deep down in my heart a voice whispered, 'Be still, sad heart, and hear thy God, who knoweth the end from the beginning.' "

For three days she waited, hoping against hope that she might see the familiar figure crossing the stream, but instead there came a company of Tibetans, who, observing her helpless condition, had laid their plans to rob her.

Roughly they seized the baggage left by the guides, thoroughly ransacked it, and took everything that caught their fancy. Fortunately Mrs. Rijnhart had secreted a few ounces of silver and her revolver when she realized that she must depend on her own efforts to escape from the robbers.

But how was she to escape? Even if she succeeded in eluding the men, how could she traverse the six hundred miles which stretched between her and the nearest white man?

Of one thing she was sure—she must not let the men see that she was afraid of them. So, outwardly calm, though inwardly quaking with fear, she demanded that her captors give her safe conduct to the nearest chief. They refused, and told her she must stay where she was, out in the cold and the snow. She demanded shelter. They refused to admit her to their tents, but grudgingly showed the way to a cave.

Having gained her point in this first encounter, she nerved herself to a second, insisting that the Tibetans surrender her horse and lead her to her friends. It was something new to these half-civilized men, accustomed to women who tamely submitted to be treated as inferiors, to find one who dared to question their

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will and tell them what they must do. In their surprise they did exactly as she asked.

Her heart was heavier than ever as she looked into the scowling faces of the two men assigned as guides. At once she saw she could not trust them; she must depend upon her woman's wit to carry her through the dangers which would surround her when she was alone with them. But she knew she must give no hint of her fears. So, resolutely putting from her the thought that she was turning her back forever not only on the lonely grave of the babe but on the spot where she had last seen her husband, she gave the sign to her guides, and the journey was begun.

After a few days her guides were succeeded by others, who at once began to make themselves disagreeable. Once she overheard them plotting to kill her; thereafter she kept her revolver always in hand. When the sight of the weapon seemed to have lost its effect, she told them that they dare not injure her, for the Chinese Government would inquire for her if she should not return to her friends. They took their revenge by forcing her to pass the nights out of doors; even when tents or huts were near the camping place they would not permit her to apply for shelter, for fear her voice would betray the fact that she was not one of the nobler sex to which they belonged. Sometimes they tried to approach her during the night, but she seemed to them never to sleep.

One night they made a last attempt to take her life. They could do nothing while she was on guard; somehow they were powerless before her unflinching gaze. Pitching their camp in a swamp, they assured her that

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here there was no danger of attack from robbers, and she might sleep without fear. During the night they called to her six times to know if she was asleep; each time she answered them promptly.

Next day, when the journey was resumed, their treatment of her was so brutal that she was in despair. Her strength was failing, for her food was only rancid butter, parched barley meal, and tea. But just when she was feeling that she could not possibly reach the border, she found a friend in a traveler, a Chinese merchant. Piercing her disguise, he asked her wonderingly, "How is it that you are here all alone like this?" When she told him the outlines of her story, he was deeply touched and said, "You have eaten much bitterness. Quiet your heart, for now that you are with us Chinese, you are all right."

The friendly Chinaman secured for her a passport from a local dignitary, and sent her to his own home, where she rested a few days before going on.

Armed with the passport, she was able to secure fairly competent guides, who led her safely. Once, however, when she was in charge of two boys, robbers attacked the party. One of the men, holding his naked sword over her head, ordered her to dismount and give him her horse and her small supplies of food and clothing. Summoning all her courage she refused to obey, and the astonished robbers left her, robbed her companions, and hurried away with their booty.

The final stages of the journey were made on foot over rough mountain paths. Though her feet were bruised and bleeding, she sometimes made as much as twenty or thirty miles a day. But the strain was

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proving too great; she realized that she could not hold out much longer. And friends were still so far away.

But they were nearer than she thought. When, one evening, at the end of a twenty-mile walk, she staggered into the village of Ta-chien-lu, she fell into the arms of an Englishwoman, a member of a mission station recently opened at that frontier post.

The six months' journey was over. She had gone out with husband and child by her side; she returned alone. But she did not regret her experience. She felt that she had done her duty, and that the entrance of other missionaries to the Forbidden Land would be easier because of what she had suffered.

Her feeling of grateful faith found expression as she wrote:

Bless the Lord, O my soul,
And all that is within me, bless his holy name,
Who redeemeth thy life from destruction,
Who crowneth thee with loving-kindness and tender mercies,
Who satisfieth thy mouth with good things,
So that thy youth is renewed like the eagle's.

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Through the dark and stormy night
Faith beholds a feeble light,
 Up the blackness streaking;
Knowing God's own time is best,
In a patient hope I rest
 For the full day breaking.

—JOHN G. WHITTIER.

XLIII

THE SECRET OF YOUTH

WHEN Mrs. Margaret E. Sangster was growing old, she was asked how she managed to keep so young. In reply she insisted that the secret of keeping young is "not in externals; it lies far deeper. The fountain of youth is in the soul."

From childhood she was unconsciously preparing to remain young. Early she learned to lift her soul in faith to God, and the lesson of faith learned in those early years never left her.

One of the first influences that taught her the possibility and the beauty of faith in God was the hearing of a story told by her father. During the first loneliness of his life in Canada where he had gone an immigrant from England, he wandered off into the woods. There he lost his way. When night came, he knelt at the foot of a tree and asked God to care for him and lead him safe back to the house he had left. As he rose, he heard a cowbell; soon he found the cow, and was guided out of the woods. For him first, and for his children after him, this was an example and a pledge of God's watch-care of his children.

A formative influence not to be forgotten was the custom of having family prayers, not only once but twice each day. While it was not the custom of the father to read the Bible through in course on these

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occasions, he did read most of the books through in their turn, though some were chosen more often than others. The verses and chapters made familiar by months and years of such reading, supplemented by the private reading to which the daughter was easily trained, gave her a groundwork for the building of character. The father's prayers are also remembered with gratitude, so helpful and uplifting were they.

Among the friends who influenced the girlhood of this remarkable woman, she tenderly recalls not only the rich and the great and the social leaders, but also a humble servant, whose portrait is well worth looking at.

"His Christian name was Anthony, and it might well have had the prefix Saint, for few men whom I have ever known so well deserved the title. Anthony was a hired man, who went on various errands and did all sorts of things; who loved horses and dogs, and understood every detail of farm work. When a small boy, he had lost the sight of an eye by accident, and when he lived with us he was gradually losing the sight of the other. In later years he became totally blind, and almost totally deaf. Notwithstanding these limitations, he continued to work with his hands on one or another farm in New Jersey, so long as his strength endured. He learned how to make baskets and fish-nets, and after he could no longer toil at difficult labor he made and sold them among his friends. During all the years that I knew Anthony Bean I never once heard him complain of blindness, deafness, or poverty. 'I have a rich Father in heaven,' he would say, 'and my wants will always be supplied.' They always were,

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to the end, and Anthony lived to be an old, old man. He had food, shelter, and clothing, and just enough money in his pocket to enable him to go from place to place in the little round of his visits to friends."

The transition from such a childhood to a faithful womanhood was easy. Through all the years of Christian service she was remarkable for the simplicity of her faith in God. This made her attractive to all who knew her. Older people delighted in talking to her or in reading her helpful books. Young people flocked about her, wrote letters to her, sought her counsel, confided in her, trusted her. And she never failed them.

She could satisfy all who came to her, for she satisfied herself by constant touch with him whom she saw by faith.

XLIV

THE FAITH OF FOUR CONVERTS

IN "The Leaves of the Tree," one of the annual reports of the British and Foreign Bible Society, a number of inspiring stories of faith were given.

One of these is from the pen of a war correspondent of the London *Daily Mail*. He said :

"A few weeks ago I stood outside the compound of Mr. Turley, the agent of the British and Foreign Bible Society in Manchuria, and looked at a pleasant-faced, elderly Chinese Bible woman talking with and selling books to a crowd of natives around her. Six years ago, when the Boxer movement arose in Northern China, the Boxers at Mukden determined to make an end of Christianity there. They stormed the Roman Catholic Cathedral and butchered the priests and nuns and their converts in horrible fashion. They broke up the Protestant Missions, with accompaniments of torture and shame which I dare not dwell on. They specially resolved to lay hold of this Bible woman, for she had been so active and successful that all knew of her. At last they caught her, with two nieces, in a suburb of the city.

"The three women were thrown on a springless Chinese cart, and, surrounded by a howling mob, were led towards the center of Mukden, where they were to be tortured, outraged, and killed. The two nieces

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were crying bitterly, and the old woman turned to them and spoke very earnestly. Why should they cry? Let them pray! God would help them! She herself started praying, and soon her nieces joined her, and their tears ceased.

"It was a long and weary ride. The roadway was blocked with carts, and the death tumbrel could only move along at snail's pace. The fears of the younger women were now over. There was not a tremble or a tear from them. Soon an uneasy sense of awe came over the Boxers. Why were not these women afraid? One man suggested that some spirit was guarding them, and another spoke fearfully of the dangers that would fall on those who should offend the spirits, while others continued to shout loudly for vengeance. Still the cart moved on, nearer to the execution ground.

"As it passed under the shadow of the city walls a Chinese gentleman, well known in the locality, rode by in state. He cast his eye over the women. 'What fools you Boxers are,' he said, 'to kill these women, when they might be sold for good silver. I will buy them off you.' The Boxers, already uneasy, saw a way out of their difficulty, and seized the opportunity. The women, bound as they were, were tossed into the back of the gentleman's cart and driven out towards the country.

"When the cart got away from the crowds into a quiet part the owner stopped it. The women's bonds were cut, and they were taken out. The Chinaman looked at them with a smile. 'Some day,' he said, 'when you are well-off again, you can pay me back

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what I have given for you to-day. Now you can go where you please.' Is it any wonder that that old Bible woman believes in Christianity and in prayer? When treaty-port critics talk to me of 'rice Christians,' I remember the Bible woman of Mukden."

The Bible Society's agent in Amoy told of a man who had been a Bible colporteur for more than thirty years:

"Bia is now eighty years old and blind, but, as he sits in chapel, he is testifying to the power and comfort of the Gospel. He preaches to the people who come in to visit, and when no one is near he sings and prays. Bia was forty-two when he first heard the Gospel. As he listened, it dawned on him that the Saviour could heal, and so he became a believer in the then-despised religion. Alas! his native village began to persecute him. They would not let him have water for his rice-fields, they refused to join with him in crushing his sugar-cane, they struck him, they did everything to make him give up his Christianity. At the age of fifty, Bia was engaged as a colporteur by the Bible Society. His work lay mainly among villages. First he went to Giamkhoe to preach: there the official beat him, but afterwards made reparation. Next, Bia went to a village four miles further on, where five men became interested and gave up their opium; some of these men still remain at the church there. Then he went twenty miles further on, to Pngiu, and opened that village also to the Gospel. Now, all three villages possess places of worship. Giamhkoe has its pastor and is a self-supporting church, with a branch which has twenty members. Pngiu is likewise a self-support-

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ing church, with nearly seventy members, and has opened up four other churches which have unitedly over sixty members. Koehkhi also has a thriving church with about forty baptized members. All these are the fruit of Bia's first efforts to extend his Master's kingdom. To-day this veteran of the Bible Society is weak in body, partly deaf, stone blind, and has no one to support him; but his heart is full of the light which the Scriptures reveal, and he looks forward to eternal light and still points out the way.

A Japanese colporteur reported the case of a man whose steadfast faith was the outgrowth of Bible reading:

"I am glad to inform you that the seed you have sown has brought forth rich harvests. When returning from Uwajima, a man who lives about twelve miles from here bought a New Testament on board the steamer. After he came home, he read the book through five or six times and found out the true God, Jesus Christ. One day, he said to his wife, 'We are not to worship too many gods. We must believe in only one God. I shall gather together my paper gods and put them on the fire.' After that he commenced to pray the Lord's Prayer and to read in the Testament daily. Later, the village officer came to his house and said, 'I think your actions for some time have been different from usual. What are you doing?' He answered the officer, 'I have this book which I bought on the steamer on my way from Uwajima, and I have read it many times. It is the best book in the world. I have found out the true God.' 'Will you let me see that book?' said the officer. 'Oh! this is *Yasu-no-*

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hon' (i.e., the Jesus Book). ‘ You must not believe; you stop—stop! ’ The man answered, ‘ You study this book. Do you know Jesus Christ? ’ ‘ No, I do not.’ ‘ Oh! you do not. Before, I thought the same as you. You must study this Testament. I shall never give up my faith unless a more excellent God than Jesus Christ comes to me. Then I will give it up.’ This man never heard a Christian sermon nor had a Christian teacher. He studied the book alone—only a five *sen* New Testament.”

From a town in South Central China a missionary wrote to the Society, telling of the faith of a man who had never had any instruction but that of the Holy Spirit, as he read the Bible:

“ Five years ago, a man called here and bought a New Testament. Then he went back to his home, which was ninety *li* distant, cast out his idols, and put up a tablet to the true God ‘ Shang Ti ’ and to ‘ Our ancestors, Adam and Eve.’ From that time he has considered himself a worshiper of God, reading his New Testament to his wife and family and from time to time making pious prostrations. This went on till two or three months ago, when his wife died and he was quite at a loss how to bury her; Chinese priests he would not have, but he had to confess to the neighbors that he had not learned the correct procedure for the Christian burial of the dead. At last he wrote out this formula and placed it on the deceased: ‘ True God, accept this in clear evidence of one who trusted in the merit of Jesus ’; then, followed by his three sons, he walked round the coffin several times, repeating the same words. Afterwards he made a journey here, to

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tell us what he had done and to inquire if he were correct. We advised him, in case of a similar emergency, to read a chapter of Scripture and offer prayer; he left us apparently relieved and grateful, but not before we felt we had met another of God's hidden children."

XLV

A PICTURE GALLERY OF HEROES

THERE is inspiration for the traveler who goes to Westminster Abbey, where the bodies of heroes of war and of peace lie side by side. And there is inspiration for the reader who will take the trouble to look into the eleventh chapter of Hebrews, the Westminster Abbey of the Bible. There the names are given and the achievements are recited of men and women who were great, not necessarily because they were prominent in the eyes of the world—some of them were very humble people—but because they were men and women of strong faith.

But what is faith? Faith is a telescope by means of which men can put heavenly things beside earthly things, that they may diligently compare them. Many people persistently choose the baubles of life instead of God's best gifts simply because they have not made the comparison.

Moses, conspicuously named in the Bible picture gallery of faith, was not one of these. The adopted son of the daughter of the Egyptian king, he weighed the treasures of Egypt in the scales with the reproach of Christ, and when he saw the result he did not hesitate to take the course that has made his name famous for all time: he turned his back on Egypt, giving himself up to the service of God's afflicted people.

A PICTURE GALLERY OF HEROES

But it is well to think of a heroine of faith without whom Moses would not have been the man he was—his mother. “If you want to know the cradle in which his greatness was rocked,” one has written, “go back to the banks of the river Nile, and see whose are the hands that fashioned the cradle of bulrushes, and whose are the hands that rocked it; and who taught the tiny babe to speak, and to love, and to know, and to grow, and to dream, and to become. You have come upon the name of a Hebrew bondwoman tending her child. Back of Moses stands his mother. By her divine ministry the divine miracle was wrought.”

A picture gallery of faith might be made to-day. For instance, the story of missions is a record of faith. Livingstone went to Africa because God called him. He went, not knowing whither he went, but leaving that with God.

Adoniram Judson labored for years without a convert, but he did not lose faith in him who could touch the hearts of men. Dr. Cortland Van Rensselaer Hodge and the others who have laid down their lives in China were enabled to be strong to the end by reason of the vision of faith.

Robert Morrison was sustained by his faith in God. The captain of the *Trident*, the ship on which he sailed from New York to China, knowing something of the impenetrable conservatism of the Chinese, said: “And so, Mr. Morrison, you really expect that you will make an impression upon the idolatry of the great Chinese empire?” “No, sir,” returned Mr. Morrison severely, “I expect God will.”

Horace Bushnell, in an address before New England

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pioneers, added still others to the picture gallery of faith. "In common graves," he says, "lie the sturdy kings of homespun, who climbed among these hills with their axes to cut away room for their cabins, and for family prayers and sow for the good future to come. Here lie their sons, who foddered their cattle on the snows and built stone fences while their corn was sprouting in the hills, getting ready, in that way, to send a boy or two to college. Here lie the good housewives who made coats every year, like Hannah, for their children's bodies and lined their memory with catechism.

"Here the millers who took honest toll of the rye, the smiths and coopers who superintended two hands and got a little revenue of honest bread and schooling from their little joint-stock of two-handed investment. Here the district committees and schoolmistresses, the religious society founders and church deacons. Who they are, by name, we cannot tell—no matter who they are—we should be none the wiser if we could name them; they themselves none the more honorable. Enough that they are, the King Lemuels and their queens of the good old times gone by—kings and queens of homespun, out of whom we drew our noble lineage."

Without these heroes of an age gone by America would not be what it is to-day, and without their faith in God these pioneers would never have come from England to America. They longed for freedom to live according to their faith, and so they crossed the sea and "endured as seeing him who is invisible," except to the eye of faith.

A PICTURE GALLERY OF HEROES

Those whose faith in God is weak may learn a lesson from a poor colored woman who earned a moderate living by washing. One day one of those anxious Christians said to her: "Ah, Nancy, it's well enough to be happy now, but I should think your thoughts of the future would make you sober. Suppose, for instance, you should be taken sick, or suppose your employers should move away, or suppose——" "Stop!" cried Nancy. "I neber supposes. De Lord is my Shepherd, and I knows I shall not want. And, honey, it is all dem s'poses as is makin' you so mis'able. You orter give dem all up and jes' trust in de Lord."

XLVI

MISSIONARIES AND MONEY-MAKERS

DURING the summer and fall of 1905 Dillon Wallace led a small party into hitherto unexplored regions of Labrador. The published account of this really remarkable journey is full of descriptions of the barren country, of the perils encountered by the travelers, of the dreariness of the ice fields and the loneliness of life among the degraded Eskimos.

The explorer and his party came to several trading posts, each in charge of an English or an American business man, who had his family with him. These people, who were there for the purpose of making money, were full of complaints about the country, the hardships they were compelled to endure, and the longings they had for life in other surroundings. At one post the travelers were eagerly welcomed. But when they came to go there was sorrow. The women cried; and one of them said: "It will be a long time before anyone comes to see us again—a long time. I suppose no one will ever come again." At a second post the trader was about to be transferred to another part of the country. "God knows how lonely it is here sometimes," the trader's wife said to Mr. Wallace. "How glad I'll be to go where there's some one beside just greasy heathen Eskimos to see!"

In striking contrast was the quiet, uncomplaining,

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contented attitude of the missionaries found by the travelers. Mr. Wallace was by no means prejudiced in their favor; but they compelled his admiration, and he became a warm admirer of these devoted men and women. Here are his confession and his tribute:

"I am free to say that previous to meeting them upon their field of labor I looked upon the work of these missionaries with indifference, if not disfavor, for I had been led to believe that they were accomplishing little or nothing. But now I have seen and I know of what incalculable value the services are that they are rendering to the poor, benighted people of the coast.

"They practically renounce the world and their home ties to spend their lives, until they are too old for further service or their health breaks down, in their heaven-inspired calling, surrounded by people of a different race and language, in the most barren land in the world.

"When their children reach the age of seven years, they must send them to school at home to be educated. Very often parents and children never meet again. This is, as many of them told me, the greatest sacrifice they are called upon to make, but they realize that it is for the best good of the child and they do not murmur. What heroes and heroines these men and women are! One must admire and honor them."

And again he says: "Of all the missionaries that I met in this bleak Northland, devoted as every one of them is to his lifework, none was more devoted and none was doing a more self-sacrificing work than Rev. Samuel Milliken Stewart of Fort Chimo. His noviti-

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ate as a missionary was spent in one of the little out-port fishing-stations of Newfoundland. Finally he was transferred to that fearfully barren stretch among the heathen Eskimos north of Nachvak. Here he and his Eskimo servant gathered together such loose drift-wood as they could find, and with this and stones and turf erected a single-room igloo. It was a small affair, not over ten or twelve by fourteen feet in size, and only an imaginary line separated the missionary's quarters from those of his servant.

"On his knees in an old resting-place for the dead, with the bleaching bones of heathen Eskimos strewn over the rocks about him, he consecrated his life efforts to the conversion of this people to Christianity. Then he went to work to accomplish this in a businesslike way. He set himself the infinite task of learning the difficult language. He lived their life with them, visiting and sleeping with them in their filthy igloos—so filthy and filled with stench from the putrid meat and fish scraps that they permit to lie about and decay that frequently at first—until he became accustomed to it—he was forced to seek the open air and relieve the resulting nausea. But Stewart is a man of iron will, and he never wavered. He studied his people, administered medicine, and taught the doctrines of Christianity at every opportunity. That first winter was a trying one. All their little stock of fuel was exhausted early. The few articles of furniture that he had brought with him he burned to keep out the frost demon, and before spring they suffered greatly with the cold.

"The winter before our arrival he transferred his efforts to the Fort Chimo district, where his field would

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be larger and he could reach a greater number of the heathen. During the journey, which was across the upper peninsula, with dogs, he was lost in storms that prevailed at the time, his provisions were exhausted, and one dog had been killed to feed the others before he finally met Eskimos who guided him in safety to George River.

"In the little cabin in which he lives, we found him one day with a little pot of high-smelling seal meat cooking for his dogs and a pan of dough-cakes frying for himself. Here I spent many delightful hours. His constant flow of well-told stories, flavored with native Irish wit, was a sure panacea for despondency. I believe Stewart, with his sunny temperament, is really enjoying his life among the heathen, and he has made an obvious impression upon them, for every one turns out to his chapel meetings, where the services are conducted in Eskimo, and takes part with a will."

What a contrast! Those who go to the land for a short season's stay speak of the hardships and long for the day of relief; those who go for the purpose of gain are full of bitterness and complaint; but those who are spending their lives in the service of Christ, though in the very same surroundings, are satisfied, content. "They do not murmur," "Really enjoying his life," "His well-told stories a sure panacea for despondency." These are the comments made by their visitor. No wonder he was impressed!

What is the secret of this contentment in the most trying surroundings? What but the presence of Christ, who is fulfilling his promise to be with those who go into all the world to preach the Gospel? That

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promise was not made to the explorer who goes for his own glory, and he feels the hardships he must face; it was not spoken to the man whose whole soul is devoted to the hoarding of gold, and he complains bitterly because of his loneliness. But those who, careless of self, eager for souls, are living in the midst of desolation and barrenness, are not only content, but always rejoicing, because the Lord is with them; always they are in the presence of him whose work they are seeking to do. It is not strange that the traveler has good words for their work.

XLVII

TAKING THE LONG LOOK

SOMEHOW there are Christians who find it difficult to believe the teaching of Jesus as to the way to be really blessed and happy. They read the Beatitudes of the fifth chapter of Matthew, and curl up their lips. "Ah, that's all very well for those who do not have to struggle for daily bread and butter, but the teaching will not do for us," they say. The truth of the matter, however, is that Jesus was laying out the lines for the very people who need to struggle to maintain an existence. And to them he gave the message, "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon the earth, where moth and rust consume, and where thieves break through and steal: but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth consume, and where thieves do not break through and steal."

And because he knew there would always be difficulty in making this comparison, he gave men faith, in order that they might realize the truth of his words.

The Bible is full of pictures of faith, drawn for the inspiration of Christians. For instance, there is the portrait of Abram, whom God told to go out from his homeland to a country which God would show him. "And he went out, not knowing whither he went."

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The faith that led him to take this step won for him the title, "The friend of God."

Would we be friends of God? Then we need to pray for faith, for greater faith, always for more faith, in order that we may be ready to follow God wherever he leads. When he makes known for us our duty, we must be ready to obey without question, instead of stopping to object, "But—" It is human to desire to know all the details of a proposed course of action before we commit ourselves to it. It is the part of wisdom to be on our guard thus when we are following human guidance. But when God is our guide, we can well afford to leave details in his hands.

There is encouragement for every struggling Christian in the fact that Abraham is not the only example of faith mentioned in the Bible. Perhaps some will say that it is impossible to be like Abraham, the father of the faithful; that is too much to expect, and therefore, discouraged, they will give up. There is encouragement, then, in the fact that elsewhere is named one who was just beginning the life of faith, Rahab the foreigner. In the midst of her wandering life she had a gleam of light, and she proved that she saw it by her works. If we feel we cannot be like Abraham, let us at least be like Rahab, and make a beginning. The faith of Abraham will come in due time if we walk with God day by day.

Jeremiah was another man of faith whose portrait is drawn clearly for us. When he was put in prison because of his prophecy of the captivity of God's people, he bought a piece of property as an evidence of his belief that after the captivity so soon to begin there

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would be a gracious return, and an opportunity to enjoy landed possessions. Faith that is worth anything proves itself by the deeds it inspires.

Then there was Peter. His portrait is included in the Bible company of men of faith. He had faith, but it was very small, and he was ready to let doubt swallow up that little. He showed his little faith by his desire to walk to Jesus on the water; he showed how even his little faith was vanishing when he cried that he was sinking, and so he teaches the lesson that great faith is not necessary if one would lay hold on Jesus, but that it is necessary that the little faith should be well grounded if one is to accomplish anything worth while in the Christian life.

The heroes of faith are not all named in the Bible. Nearly every church can point to its own honor roll of such heroes. There is a church in a small town in a Western State where, for a time, there were so few members that Presbytery thought it wise to dissolve the organization. But the feeble congregation pleaded for more time, and earnestly endured the hard things that came, before their vision of an earnest, active church could come true. The faith of the pioneer heroes has been justified, however, and the church is a tower of strength in the community.

How many homes, too, have in them heroes and heroines of faith, fathers and mothers who will not give up praying for a wandering son or daughter. Their faith in God, who is ever true to his covenant promise, is abiding. The answer to the prayers may be delayed, but in God's good way and time they know the answer will come.

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An observer, who signed himself, "One of the Folks," once told in *The Interior* of one of these humble, everyday heroes whose faith in God is steadfast in the face of trial. He said:

"We all sat together in prayer meeting, and the sweet old saint who had not seen the face of man or woman for fifty years sat where every Wednesday evening found him—on the front row of chairs close to where the pastor stood. And the pastor gave out the hymn for us to sing, 'Count Your Many Blessings; Name Them One by One.'

"Now we all knew the dear old man had blessings; we had heard him say so. But none of us thought he had so very many. It was just after he was married that an accident had cost him his sight. He had earned a living for his wife and himself through nearly the whole of a half century by scrubbing other people's clothes clean at the washtub in their little kitchen, the wife standing by to tell him when they were made spotless. Not content to provide this way for two—they were childless—he adopted and raised an orphan niece. Now in his old age he had lost his life companion and helper, and apparently about the only earthly satisfaction that remained to him was the faithful care of this foster child and her husband. But they were not rich, and what they so gladly shared with him could not be more than a sufficiency.

"But the pastor had given out, 'Count Your Many Blessings; Name them One by One.' We heard the blind saint sigh, 'I can't do that.'

"What calamity had befallen here! Had the blind

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man lost his faith? No—wait—he is finishing his sentence.

“I can’t count them that way; I’d never get through if I did.”

“Then we all sang, though ashamedly in our hearts, knowing that we have never been faced with that difficulty when we counted our blessings. Then afterward we prayed that God would open our eyes to see as well as the blind man.”

That man had heard Christ’s message, “Be of good cheer; it is I; be not afraid.” This was the explanation of his serene faith. The same message is spoken to us daily. Let us hear it when anxiety overtakes, when difficulty perplexes, when temptation assails, when sorrow is heavy upon us! What need is there to fear when the Lord is walking on the troubled waters that threaten us, when he is planning for our welfare? Since he is planning for our happiness, why do we find it so hard to trust our happiness to him? If we wait on him, he will give us the best things of life. Jesus said, “Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you.” What things? Everything necessary to happiness. You don’t believe it? Try it, and see!

ELEVEN
SERVING IN FAITH

"Build a little fence of trust
 Around to-day.
Fill the space with loving work,
 And therein stay.
Look not through the sheltering bars
 Upon to-morrow.
God will help thee bear what comes,
 Of joy and sorrow."

XLVIII

SHE WOULD NOT DENY HER LORD

SITA, a wealthy Lingait widow in India, was still a girl when her husband died, and she was left to look forward to a long life of loneliness. Fortunately her people did not treat widows as harshly as do peoples in some other parts of India. But her lot was hard enough.

Her only joy was her two-year-old son. She watched him grow until she was persuaded to let him go into training for the priesthood. Naturally her thoughts were turned more than ever to the native temple, and she went there, seeking comfort. But her heart was unsatisfied.

Then came a day when a native Christian had a talk with a friend in her hearing. At first she paid little attention to his words. Finally something he said attracted her attention. Soon she was listening with all her might, drinking in the story of him who came to earth that those who put their trust in him might find peace and rest.

Almost at once she made up her mind that she would believe in Christ. When she applied for admission to the church, she was baptized.

“Then the storm broke,” wrote a missionary, in telling the story.¹ “Had Sita realized that following in

¹ In “A Struggle for a Soul.”

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the steps of the thorn-crowned Master the disciple must drink of his cup, a cup seven times more bitter than death?

“ Her life had been hard before, but now it became intolerable. On every hand she met with hatred and loathing. Curses and maledictions were hurled at her daily, hourly. Still she clung to her son. But even his baby heart they tried to alienate from the one whose sole remaining joy in life he was. And then, one terrible morning, she awoke to find him gone. Where?

“ They had kidnaped him, in the hope that if it were a question of choosing between her son and her new ‘swami,’ mother-love would give the casting vote. Or if not, at least the boy’s mind should not be poisoned, but be trained in the old faith.

“ It was too much. ‘ My son! Oh, my son! ’ she cried.

“ But there was no voice, no answer, except cruel taunts.

“ ‘ Give him back to me,’ she cried with a breaking heart. ‘ I will do anything you wish.’

“ ‘ Undergo the purification rites, then,’ they made answer. ‘ Let your tongue be touched with heated gold, and you will be cleansed.’

“ ‘ I cannot,’ she moaned. ‘ I cannot deny the Saviour. But in mercy, let me have my son! The light of my life! I must see his face or die! Give him to me! ’

“ But only stony faces and more stony hearts were round her.

“ ‘ Forsake your Lord,’ they insisted relentlessly, ‘ or you will not have the child.’

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"Then her brave spirit embraced the cross. In that hour the sword passed through her soul, but she stood firm.

"'I will never forsake him,' she said steadily, and for a time her tormentors turned away, baffled.

Years passed. She did not see her son, though she knew she had only to yield and he would be restored to her. But "one thing was clear to her; to deny Christ her Saviour was impossible. All else could be borne, but not to be untrue to him, and to her deepest self."

Friends forsook her. She had to leave her home and all her property. She was taken in at the mission station, and there she ministered to those who needed her attention in sickness and in health.

Daily she prayed that she might see her son once more, and that her faith might become stronger and stronger.

One day, when she was growing old, she was on the way to the public well when a young man stopped her, and asked for Lingait Sita. She answered that this was her own name.

"Then you are my mother," he said.

He was still a heathen priest, and after a short visit he left her to return to the temple.

And she remained behind, continuing her life of service and her prayers for the son who had been restored to her after so many years.

XLIX

THE PROOF OF THEIR FAITH

THE life speaks louder than words, and the man who lives his faith will make more impression on those about him than he who is content to tell of it.

A missionary,¹ in speaking of his work, said: "We cannot remember too much or too often that it is our lives, far more than our teaching, that the natives look at and long to understand. We do, indeed, need to be 'epistles known and read of all men.' Angry words about some mistake by an incapable workman often do serious harm, and deter people from coming under the influence of the Gospel."

Then the missionary told of a native officer who had always resisted every effort to persuade him to listen to the teachers of Christianity. Evidently he had nothing but contempt for the faith of those who talked of Christ. But after a time he was assisting a missionary in building a house. Suddenly—to the astonishment of his fellow natives—he began to listen to instruction, and finally he was baptized.

But the missionary understood the reason for the man's change of attitude: he had seen Christian faith proved under difficult circumstances. "As a matter of fact, no work is more trying to the temper [than house-building], or gives more splendid opportunities of

¹ In "Uganda by Pen and Camera."

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proving, by a Christian demeanor under all circumstances, what a life influenced by the Gospel is. Indeed, many workmen, finding the missionary a kind master, so very different from their own native overseers, are willing to listen to the introduction of the Gospel.

"The first thing the natives ask about a missionary is, 'Is he a kind man?' or, as they put it, 'Has he kindness?' If they are told that 'he has kindness,' then they desire to come and see him, and are willing to listen to his teaching. But if he is announced to be a man of anger, people are immediately afraid of him, and take care to stay away."

Susie Bouchelle Wright has told in a newspaper article of the consequences of the life of faith of a young girl in the homeland:

"A man of another race once came to visit America, a cultured, thoughtful man, but an unbeliever and what we call, broadly, a heathen. He admitted the superiority of Christianity as a code of ethics, but cited other religions with ideals almost identical, and was outspoken in his doubt of the vital principle of our faith—the changed nature, the indwelling of a divine Spirit. It was all in vain that his friends took him to hear the finest preachers and threw about him the most beautiful ecclesiastical influences. He only shook his head and smiled. "There is nothing in it all," he said, "except the strong religious instinct which is as much a part of human nature as love or friendship."

"During his stay a terrible ordeal came to a young girl in the family in which he was visiting, an ordeal which involved humiliation and defeat. If ever re-

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venge is justifiable it would seem to have been so in this case, so unprovoked and malicious were the circumstances. The keenness of the anguish of it passed after a time, as the keenness of sorrow and despair always does. When the foreigner was about to return to his home, he asked the girl to go with him for a quiet walk in her father's garden.

"'I am so sorry,' said she timidly, 'that your visit has been spoiled by—what came to me.'

"He was silent for a moment. 'I am sorry,' said he, 'for your hurt—so sorry. But may I tell you something?' She lifted her tear-filled eyes to his face, and he went on:

"' You have been on trial before me for the reality of what you profess to believe. I knew that you had confessed Christ, as your saying is. I thought of your Sunday-school class, your three days each week in the mission school, your singing in the choir; but none of these things counted at all when the trouble came beside the claims that Christians make for their religion. I said to myself, "I'll watch her carefully now. If this faith of hers will keep her patient and sweet under trial, if it will uphold her in defeat, if it will plead against the impulse for revenge, I shall know that it is something more than human will and nature, for she is just a weak young girl. She has not had the age or the experience that would make her able to reason out things for herself, and get at the science and philosophy of it all—she has nothing but her religion to fall back on."

"The girl covered her face with her hands, remembering only the weakness of the sobbing and crying

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hours, but the stranger removed them gently. ‘Look up,’ said he, ‘and do not be ashamed of anything. I am convinced of the truth of what you believe—not by your creed or your churches, but by the way a young girl can answer, all unknowing it, the arraignment of her faith.’

“The man went back to his own country and his own people, and in after years his Christian work brought life and light to hundreds in his native land. But the girl in America just grew into busy womanhood in a life filled with the simple, everyday cares of a wife and mother; and though she treasured his words in her memory, neither she nor the world ever realized how much she had done for the stranger within the gates.”

Centuries ago Christ said, “By their fruits ye shall know them.” Daily the truth of his words is shown, as Christians prove their faith by lives of devotion, and so win friends and acquaintances to their Master.

L

FOURTEEN FAITHFUL YEARS

ONLY faith in God enabled Ann Hasseltine to promise to go with Adoniram Judson in the face of his distinct warning that she would be exposed to "every kind of want and distress; to degradation, insult, persecution, and perhaps a violent death;" that together they would see "many weary, disconsolate hours, and feel a sinking of spirit and an anguish of mind," of which they could have no conception beforehand. But she was not afraid; she was ready to endure everything with her husband, because she knew that God would be their helper.

When the promised difficulties began to come, she did not falter. Assuring herself, "These are the trials I anticipated, and which, with God's help, I am ready to meet," she went serenely on her way.

When anxieties and persecution multiplied, she wrote in her journal, on August 8, 1813: "We never were happier, never more contented in any situation than the present. We feel that this is the post to which God hath appointed us; that we are in the path of duty."

Six weeks later husband and wife sat down at the communion table in Rangoon. Two other foreigners were with them. And as they received the Lord's Supper they saw by faith the day when thousands

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of natives would gather for a like service. They knew that day would come: did they not have God's promise?

Years passed. Trouble and sorrows increased, but faith became stronger, and God enabled the devoted husband and wife to go on their way in peace. They reaped the beginning of the harvest the eye of faith had seen when there was not a single convert. They hoped that the worst was past. Their future looked especially bright when the king invited them to make their home in Ava, the capital city. In 1824, after this removal, friends in America heard that all was going well with them; then two years passed without a word, so that those who knew them became frantic with anxiety.

Their anxiety would have been increased if they had known that war had broken out between England and Burmah, and that all the foreigners at the capital were suspected of being spies. Mr. and Mrs. Judson felt secure in the knowledge of the king's favor, but on June 8, 1824, they were astonished by a visit from the public executioner, who, without a word of explanation, seized the missionary, threw him on the floor, bound him with cords, and dragged him away to the prison. With admirable forethought Mrs. Judson at once destroyed all letters and diaries in the house, lest these be found by searchers and something in them distorted into a semblance of evidence against her husband.

At first the devoted wife was tempted to give way to despair as she thought of her sorrowful situation. She was alone in the midst of foes, the only English-

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speaking woman in the city. Her husband could do nothing for her; perhaps she would never see him again.

Then faith triumphed. She realized that she was not alone. God was with her; she knew he would not forsake her. So she cast herself on his care, and asked for strength to bear what was yet to come to her of anxiety and hardship.

That night she was herself seized and placed under guard, but no information was given her as to Mr. Judson's fate; not until morning did she learn that he was in the death prison, bound with three pairs of iron fetters, and fastened by the ankles to a long horizontal pole several feet from the ground. Her first thought was of his safety, rather than her own, so she wrote a letter to the king's sister, appealing to her to intercede on behalf of Mr. Judson. When, a little later, Mrs. Judson was released, she forced her way, in spite of many obstacles, to the governor of the city, who, after listening to her, said he could not set the missionary free, but that it was in his power to make his confinement more bearable. Was she willing to pay for favors to him?

She did not stop to think that money was scarce, but at once handed over the equivalent of one hundred dollars and secured an order for the removal of her husband from the dreadful death chamber to a shed in the prison yard, where she could, if she wished, send him food.

The resourceful wife next hastened to the queen's sister and asked her help. At first the princess refused, but her woman's heart was so touched by continued en-

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treaties that she promised to do her best. That her efforts proved unavailing was apparent next day, when officers of the king searched the home of the missionaries and confiscated most of their goods. Fortunately Mrs. Judson managed to secrete a sum of money, otherwise she would have been unable to continue her fight for her husband's life.

At first she hoped to be successful within a few days, but weeks and months passed and he was still in the prison. Then, more than ever before, she poured out her heart before him in whom was her confidence, and always she received strength to make fresh efforts. Nearly every day for several months she visited some one of the royal family. Hope would be kindled by these visits, only to be quickly dashed again. Sometimes those who received her treated her shamefully. Once, when Mr. Judson was suffering from fever, and five pairs of fetters were on his ankles, she walked several miles in the burning sun of midsummer to see an official who, she hoped, might do something for his relief. When he had refused her request, she was turning disappointedly away, when he demanded her silk umbrella. As it would be dangerous to walk without protection, she asked him for a paper umbrella in exchange, explaining that she had no money with her. With a brutal laugh he told her that she was too thin to suffer from sunstroke. She *was* thin; her sufferings had wasted her to a skeleton.

During these months Mrs. Judson was permitted to visit the prison. The husband's faith in God was as firm as that of his wife. They strengthened one another as they talked of the day of God's deliverance.

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Many times Mr. Judson was heard repeating Madame Guyon's lines :

No place I seek, but to fulfill,
In life and death, thy lovely will;
No succor in my woes I want,
Except what thou art pleased to grant.

The jailers demanded bribes for every privilege allowed. Frequently they would not permit Mrs. Judson to come during the daytime, so that she had to walk two miles from the prison to her home long after dark. Once she was allowed to take the sufferer a pillow, in which she had secreted their uncompleted manuscript of the Burmese translation of the Bible; she thought this would be the safest place for it.

For his protection in the winter weather she secured leave, again for a consideration, to build with her own hands a little bamboo hut in the prison yard. Several months later, when the hut was torn down by the jailers, she appealed to the governor, who assured her that she might as well cease her efforts; it was only with difficulty that he had managed to keep her husband from the executioner. Not until Mr. Judson was attacked by a wasting fever could she take him from the small, unventilated room in which one hundred prisoners were confined to a second hut within the walls. Then, with her babe, Marie, who was born seven months after the beginning of the imprisonment, she spent her time in a hut without the walls, also built by herself.

One day the governor called her to the palace. When she returned her husband had disappeared. Although warned that she had better look to her own

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safety, she hurried in search of him, carrying her babe. At last she overtook him and learned that he had been dragged at the end of a rope a distance of nine miles, without food, with bare feet, over the scorching hot stones.

In the village where the exhausted prisoner was next confined smallpox broke out in the jailer's family. Mrs. Judson, forgetting the father's unkindness to her, nursed the sick children and saved their lives, but the effort almost cost her own. For two months she tossed in fever. Little Marie, deprived of her accustomed nourishment, was pining away, till the mother, by bribing the jailers, secured leave for Mr. Judson to take the child daily to beg a little nourishment from the mothers of young children in the village.

But even this relief was not long possible. While the wife was still sick, the husband was taken from her side and sent away. Fearing that he was to become once more an inmate of the prison pen, the despairing wife prayed as she never had prayed before for his release. Still her faith was strong; she knew that God had not forgotten them.

The answer came in an unexpected way. When the English approached the city, the general, as one condition of his retirement, demanded that all prisoners should be set free. Thus the husband was returned to the wife, without whose efforts he could never have lived through the long period of imprisonment.

What that reunion meant to the husband of such a wife may be judged from his words, spoken to a friend, to whom he was once talking of the highest possible pleasure in life: "What do you think of floating down

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the Irrawaddy, on a cool, moonlight evening with your wife by your side, and your baby in your arms, free—all free? But you cannot understand it; it needs a twenty-one months' qualification; and I can never regret my twenty-one months of misery, when I recall that one delicious thrill. I think I have had a better appreciation of what heaven may be ever since."

Mrs. Judson, too, gave expression to her joy in the deliverance that had come to them: "I presume to say," she wrote in a home letter, "that no persons on earth ever were happier than we were. . . . Our feelings continually dictated expressions like this, 'What shall we render to the Lord for all his benefits towards us!'"

Benefits? Did they call pain and anxiety and grief, privation and prison and fetters, benefits? Yes! When they were in the midst of the trials they knew that all would be well with them; and when the trials were past they were reaping the joys that faith told them would be theirs.

LI

THE FAITH OF A WORKER

“ May’st thou grow to know and fear him,
Love and serve him all thy days;
Then go dwell forever near him,
See his face and sing his praise.”

THIS was the prayer of an English mother, as she held her youngest daughter in her arms. That daughter was Irene Petrie, who became “one of the first representatives of the missionary movement among students to fall in the forefront of foreign missions.”

The baby thus dedicated to God in infancy early gave herself to the Saviour. For a time life went quite smoothly, and it did not seem hard to trust in her heavenly Father. But when she was yet a young girl she was put to the test. Her father, a soldier who had retired after honorable service, lost much of his fortune, and the remainder was endangered. For some years the young girl who had been accustomed to a care-free life was troubled as she saw her parents’ anxiety. Her faith was well grounded, however. In her diary she made three references, and only three, to the misfortune which would to so many be the one subject of thought and conversation; and two of these references were an expression of unquestioning trust. Once she wrote: “‘ It is better to walk in the dark

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with God than to go alone alone in the light.’’ And again: “‘ God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.’”

This early misfortune was the best preparation for life. When, later, the cause for anxiety was removed, Irene was a sweet, winsome woman. Her biographer mentions the fact that the shadow on her early days left her “with no tinge of sadness, still less of bitterness, but with a deep sense of the seriousness of life, and of our stewardship for everything we own, since it is ‘our Lord’s money’; with a peculiarly tender affection for both her parents, and a true-hearted sympathy for the unsuccessful and unfortunate; above all, with a childlike trust in God; so when success and popularity came to her, they did not intoxicate her, even in the first glow of abundant life.”

As a schoolgirl she was diligent and faithful. Her reports stated that she was never absent and never late. Although frequently the youngest in her class, she took high honors. In the Cambridge higher local examinations “she was one of three examinees in all England who were ‘distinguished’ in each of the three branches of the history group.”

In 1885 she was presented at court, and at once entered on a life of travel, concerts, exhibitions, entertaining, and being entertained. She was a general favorite, but her popularity did not spoil her. A friend said of her at the time: “Irene Petrie truly had great gifts, and she not only enjoyed them gratefully, as coming from a loving Father’s hand, but used them every one in his service.”

In all her social life she remembered she was “not

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her own." She asked God's blessing on all she did. To an intimate friend she said: "I should as soon think of going out to pay calls without putting on my hat as without offering up a prayer."

This habit of prayerful waiting on God made her dissatisfied with the thought of a life of selfish ease. She made no secret of the fact that she dreamed of this once, however. In her own words: "There was a time when a life of leisure for literature and art, and ample means as mistress of a spacious country house, seemed most desirable to me. Now I know that it could never satisfy me."

It was not long before she began to fashion her life in accordance with the text, "In the kingdom of heaven there is no room for an idle person." And when she sought something to do, her question was: "What is least likely to be done by others, if I do not do it? For years she was a Sunday-school teacher. During eight years of her service it was said that she never absented herself from her post. Moreover, she was determined to be thoroughly equipped for her work.

During these years of teaching this devoted girl was always busy. She wrote letters to absent pupils, entertained her large class in sections in her own home, and gave noonday addresses to working women. At the Prison Mission and numerous church gatherings she assisted with her voice. She was instrumental in organizing the "College by Post" which has done a great work in training girls who have been deprived of educational advantages. Four hundred skilled teachers were enlisted in this enterprise.

She was not one of those "good people whose time

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seems to be at the command of everyone except their nearest relatives." There is abundant testimony to her helpfulness in all that concerned her father and sisters. In the home entertainments she was a perfect hostess.

She was always ready to put herself out for the neglected. She often placed herself by "some elderly or timid guest, or brought all her lively fancy to the entertaining of one who might have been passed by as the most insignificant person present." It is not strange, then, that she was "the life of the whole party in a country house, organizing games on a wet day, telling stories to the children, willing not only to play or to sing herself as happily to an audience of one as to a roomful of connoisseurs, but to show off some one's else playing or singing to the best advantage as a skillful and sympathetic accompanist."

In October, 1891, after a season of more than usual social enjoyment, she met Mr. Robert P. Wilder, the founder of the Student Volunteer Movement. "Then the clear call to leave the home life was heard." She wrote a letter to the Church Missionary Society, offering herself as a missionary. This first letter was never mailed; it was destroyed when she saw her lonely father's grief at the thought of the separation. A few months later his death occurred, and soon she was on her way to India.

This was in October, 1893. Four years of activity followed. Then she died. One year of this time was spent in travel, and at home. But think of what she accomplished in the remaining three years:

"She mastered Urdi and Kashmiri, and made some

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progress in Hindi; and she diligently instructed in the Gospel five different classes of people; children of Europeans, through Sunday schools; Eurasians, especially women and children; her own servants, mostly Mohammedans; Kashmiri schoolboys, mostly Hindus; and zenana women, Hindu and Mohammedan, of many different degrees socially and intellectually. Her musical and artistic powers were turned to account to secure friends for the work in a variety of ways; her pen spoke of it to many at home, both in magazine articles and in private letters. And though she never allowed herself to be drawn into society to the hindrance of her work, the recollection of her intercourse with 'station people' made a resident in India assert that looking only at her influence over her compatriots, one could never say that her life had been thrown away."

No, her life was fruitful, wherever she was. "She did so adorn the religion she professed," a friend wrote. "She made goodness itself attractive," said another. "She was one of those rare, beautiful souls who carry wherever they go an atmosphere of purity and goodness, and insensibly make all who come in contact with them better for their sweet influence," was the comment of another. And Mrs. Ashley Carus-Wilson, her biographer, adds: "She lived her religion; she did not talk about it. Her whole career was a testimony to the hope that was in her."

TWELVE
IN LIFE AND IN DEATH

The gates of life swing either way
On noiseless hinges, night and day.
One enters through the open door;
One leaves it, to return no more.
And which is happier, which more blest,
God knoweth best.

We greet with smiles the one who comes
Like sunshine to our hearts and homes,
And reach out longing hands with tears
To him who in his ripened years
Goes gladly to his heavenly rest.
God knoweth best.

He guards the gates. We need not dread
The path those little feet must tread,
Nor fear for him who from our sight
Passed through them to the realms of light.
Both in his loving care we rest.
God knoweth best.

—MARY WHARTON LYON.

LII

A FINISHED TRANSACTION

A WIDOW in the Congo district of Africa who had become interested in Christianity lost her only daughter. She gave up attendance at church, for she said she could no longer believe in a God of love. In a missionary biography the story is told of a Christian who tried to comfort her. "He told her the pathetic story of the widow of Nain in the graphic manner natural to the Congo native. He said the poor widow had nursed and watched and wept . . . until the dread day when her son was taken from her. Then she screamed . . . and cut herself . . . in her grief; but it was of no avail. . . . Just then there came along One who was full of majesty and gentleness and love . . . bidding her not to weep, for her son was not dead, but sleeping. . . . This stranger touched the bier . . . and her son was restored to life. 'I cannot tell you your child will come back again,' the native continued, 'but Jesus is the same, loving and tender as he ever was. Trust in him, and you will meet your daughter again.' 'Since that time,' as the sorrowing mother told a friend, 'my tears have all gone, I have trusted the Saviour, and never doubted his love.'"

Unless our faith in Christ is like that of this African Christian, giving us assurance that as he rose from the

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dead, so also shall we rise, and our loved ones, our faith is vain. This was the message Paul gave to his friends at Corinth, a message that should find an echo in every believer's heart, not only in days when no one is called from the home into God's presence, but also in days when faith is put to the test by the coming of God's messenger, Death.

An old volume, the journal of John Winthrop, Governor of Massachusetts Bay Colony, tells how one man stood this hard test. He landed in America in July, 1630. The very next day his son, Henry, was drowned in a creek near the landing place. When the father wrote to his wife, who was still in England, he began the letter: "Blessed be the Lord our good and merciful Father that yet hath preserved me in life and health to salute thee, and to comfort thy longing heart with the joyful news of my welfare and the welfare of thy beloved children." Having thus sounded the note of triumphant faith, he told gently the news of Henry's death.

The record reminds one of the inquiry the Old Testament prophet made of a mother concerning her son, "Is it well with the lad?" and her reply, "It is well." And just a little while before her son's eyes had been closed in death.

She was right, and the Puritan governor was right: it is well with those whom God calls to himself, well for them and well for us. For God has taken them away from the limitations of life, and we can look forward to going to them when God's call comes to us.

So when the blinds are drawn and the bell is muffled and all the house is still because one who has been sick

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has closed his eyes for the last time on earth; when eyes are burning with tears and hearts are heavy because of fearful anticipations of years spent without the presence of one dear to us, let the words of Christ sink into our hearts, "The damsel is not dead, but sleepeth." The life of those who love Jesus does not end when the eyes close in death; they will open again to see the glory of the King. Some day our eyes, too, will close in sleep, and we shall awaken where he is, and where are our loved ones who have gone before us.

Yet there is apt to come to every Christian a time when his faith in the resurrection falters. The tempter suggests doubts, and the suggestion causes dismay and worry.

But why?

When a piece of ground has been bought and paid for, when the title deeds have passed and been recorded, when the title has been examined and insured, the business man does not worry about the reality of his investment or wish that he might do something more to get possession of the property; he knows it is his. Then why do so many Christians worry about death and what is to come after death?

The absurdity of this worry is apparent when one reads a message like that once penned to a friend by Dr. Herrick Johnson: "We shall be going soon, and we have no new terms to make with the blessed Lord. We took him at his word, and settled things once for all, and we need not trouble ourselves about the final issue. 'I'm a poor sinner and nothing at all,' but I can look up into the Lord's face and say, 'Thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee.'"

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There is greater assurance of the reality of our possession of eternal life when once the heart has been given to Christ than there is of the reality of our possession of earthly property. Earthly possessions depend on the integrity of men, but our possession of eternal life depends on the integrity of God.

LIII

LOOKING DEATH IN THE FACE

NINETEEN hundred years ago, when the elders and the scribes threatened Peter and John, what gave them strength to stand unmoved? The threats might mean death, and they knew it. How could Stephen calmly face death at the hands of the prejudiced mob? How could the early Christians, driven from their homes because of their faith in Christ, continue to tell of their faith to others when they knew that death might be the penalty?

There is just one answer. Death had no terrors for them. Christ, whose will they were trying to do, had conquered death, and so had robbed death of all its terrors for everyone who believed in him. Their Lord was living; they were sure of this. They could think of no greater joy than to be forever with him. Death would mean only going to him. Life on earth was dear to them, but life with Christ was dearer still.

Imagine, then, what consternation there would be among the Christians when some tried to persuade them that there could be no resurrection of the dead. The heart would be taken out of their religion if they should believe this, as Paul showed them when he argued: "If there is no resurrection for you, then there was no resurrection for Christ; if Christ is not risen, then we preachers have been lying, you who have list-

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ened to us have been deceived, your faith is worthless, your sins are unforgiven, you are without hope. But Christ rose—I know it, for I have seen him and spoken to him; therefore you, too, shall rise; it is his promise. So your faith is justified, and our preaching is not in vain."

Just what belief in a message like that can mean was shown to two boys 'in Syria, not very far from the spot where the author of this message saw the risen Christ on the road to Damascus. The boys were camping one night in a tent near the place where their father, Rev. William K. Eddy, was planning to preach next day. After all had lain down to sleep, Mr. Eddy realized that a bloodvessel in his chest had burst. He called his servant and his children and said, "To-day our dear Dr. Ford is just sailing from America for Syria, and I am leaving Syria for heaven." After sending messages to his friends and family, he asked his son Clarence to repeat the Twenty-third Psalm. Then he said, "Let us go to sleep." "At midnight, when others were sleeping, he went down into the valley and up into the brightness of the life of the redeemed," a friend said, in telling of his death.

Another Christian showed his belief a little differently, but the meaning was the same: "Some day you will read in the papers that D. L. Moody, of East Northfield, is dead. Don't you believe a word of it! At that moment I shall be more alive than I am now. I shall have gone up higher, that's all—out of this old clay tenement into a house that is immortal: a body that death cannot touch, that sin cannot taint, a body fashioned like unto his glorious body. I was born

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of the flesh in 1837. I was born of the Spirit in 1856. That which is born of the flesh may die. That which is born of the Spirit will live forever."

Faith like this not only takes away the fear of death, but it helps to solve the problem of life. It becomes so much easier to resist temptation when one stops to think that one has a living Saviour who has promised to take us to be with him, and is even now living in our hearts, giving us the strength of heaven for our earthly tasks.

What he can do for a boy was shown in 1908, when Mark Njoji, a young convert from Bolenge, West Central Africa, who had come to America for training, was tempted to forget his Christian profession. Mark, the son of the greatest witch doctor in a large region, who had been trained by his father to be his successor, was asked by a lecturer to give to an American audience an exhibition of witch dancing. He needed the money. But he did not hesitate. "I did not come here as a witch doctor," he answered. "I came by the word of the Father who liveth in heaven."

It is impossible to explain an act like this by saying that the boy was deceiving himself. He had learned the secret of triumphant living of which Dr. David Gregg has told: "In a Scottish valley, beside a little brook, where there was no kindly soil, a Highlander once planted a tree. Of course, it wilted and drooped. But suddenly, to the surprise of everyone, it took a new start in life and bore rich fruit. What was the source of its new life? An examination revealed the secret. With a marvelous vegetable instinct it sent out a shoot which ran

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along and over a little sheep bridge, and rooted itself in the rich loam on the other side of the brook. From this rich loam it drew its new life. Even so the resurrection of Jesus Christ bridges the River of Death that flows between earth and heaven, and the souls of men who see and know this send out the shoot of faith, and this shoot, running over the bridge between earth and heaven, roots itself in the spiritual realities beyond, and draws spiritual life from the very fullness of God!"

LIV

OF ONE BLOOD

THE expression of faith is the same the world over. However people may differ in race or education or situation, when they show that they have "conviction of things not seen" distinctions disappear; the recent convert from heathenism becomes like the man who is enjoying the heritage that comes from generations of Christian ancestors. For God hath "made no distinction between us and them, cleansing their hearts by faith."

A missionary in China has told of an old woman who presented herself for baptism and was asked as to her faith. She answered, "I am a dull old woman, but I know that I am a sinner, and that the Father can save me, the Lord can save me, the Holy Spirit can save me. More than this I do not understand." Of course she was baptized. A year later she died. When the end came, she prayed aloud, "Father, save me, Lord Jesus, save me, Holy Spirit, save."

A missionary in India who spoke of baptizing forty people, said in a letter to friends at home that two nights before the baptism the head men of the village came down, angry, furious, because this work had been going on. They came down at ten o'clock at night, called the men out of their homes, and said to them, "Now, then, those men that are going to become Chris-

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tians stand on one side; those who are going to be with us stand on the other side. From the men who become Christians we take away work and land; we deny them the village washerwoman; we deny them the village barber; we deny all we can. Now, those who are going to be Christians go on that side." Everyone that was under instructions for baptism took his place as a Christian.

The biographer of Mrs. Elizabeth Fry, the English Quakeress who devoted her life to alleviating the condition of prisoners, tells how many afflictions came to her in later life. A much-loved daughter died, her father lost his fortune, and the family was compelled to leave the comfortable country home. Severe illness came to one and another of the home circle. In all these misfortunes she had the sympathy of millions. William Wilberforce wrote to her:

" You, I doubt not, will be enabled to feel, as well as know, that even this event will be one of those which, in your instance, are working for good. You have been enabled to exhibit a bright specimen of Christian excellence in doing the will of God, and I doubt not you will manifest a similar specimen in the harder and more difficult exercise of suffering it."

The confidence of her correspondent was justified. In her time of trouble, she showed the same trust which had enabled her to undertake many difficult tasks in her Master's name. Once, during her time of greatest affliction, she was attending Quaker meeting on First Day. The big tears rolled down her face in quick succession, testifying to her sorrow and anguish. Yet before the session ended she rose,

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calmed herself, and spoke most thrillingly from the words: "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him." In a letter to her children, she expressed the same faith: "I have found such help and strength in prayer to God; and, highly mysterious as this dispensation may be in some points of view, yet I think I have frequently, if not generally, been able to say, 'Not as I will, but as thou wilt.' "

So like this expression of faith that would not shrink was the message in the midst of bitter anguish of an American negro of whom Rev. D. Baines Griffiths has told in *The Sunday School Times*:

"It was fifteen minutes past opening time when the cashier of the bank reached his desk. After attending to the wants of a lady who had been waiting to see him, he turned to his colleagues and explained his tardiness. 'My darkey was burned out last night,' he said. The clerks had heard before of the cashier's colored protégé, so that their interest was aroused as the cashier proceeded to details.

"His darkey friend was a middle-aged man who lived a few streets away. For some years he had been working at the packing-house in the south end. By careful planning he had succeeded in building a 'residence,' a three-roomed cottage, hardly more than a shanty. The fire insurance men smilingly expressed their regrets that they could not accept the risk. But it was a royal home for him and his wife and babies. Moreover, the happy time had come, and he was making his last payments on his property.

"It was late in the afternoon when the fire had broken out, the flames doing speedy and thorough work. The

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firemen took supper that evening at the usual hour, and they were not fatigued. Sympathetic neighbors attended to Abe's wife, the little folks being cared for by the banker's family.

" 'We knew that Abe would soon be coming from work,' the cashier said, 'and we hated to see him turn the corner and see what had happened to his little all. Pretty soon we saw him come into the road, and we watched and waited. Our hearts fairly ached for the poor fellow. All at once he stopped and staggered. Then he picked himself together, and came slowly toward the desolation. The neighbors stood around wanting to say something, but all of us seemed tongue-tied. When the man reached the group, as we stood near the ruins of his home, he took off his hat and bowed his head. Then we heard him say, quietly but clearly, "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away. Blessed be the name of the Lord."'

" 'I tell you, men,' continued the cashier, as he wiped his eyes, 'I'm not much on churches, and you know it; but I think I'd give every dollar I'm worth if I could have a religion like that.'"

It is the glory of those who trust in Christ that their possession is not for themselves only: all may share it who will. For God has made "of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth."

LV

FRET NOT

WHY does a Christian allow himself to be afraid, when he knows that God is his Father, and that he himself is God's son? A Scotch lad learned the folly of such fear when he was walking by night with his father. He was trembling because of the imaginary terrors of the darkness. His father drew him close to his side, threw the skirt of his mantle over the boy's head and led him homeward. The memory of the way in which fear took its flight helped him in later years, when he was tempted to distrust God. God, his Father, was by his side: why should he fear?

Yet every Christian has his seasons of discouragement and fear, when he feels that everything is against him and that he might just as well give up trying. Some people seem to have this feeling most of the time; others give way to depressing thought once in a while, perhaps when something has gone wrong in business, or when the maid has left without warning, or when one of the children has been guilty of some grave fault. But whatever the reason given for his discouragement, the real secret is in the Christian himself. He is not living close enough to God. The heart that is fixed, trusting in God, is superior to discouragement and fear.

For the earnest Christian there is never a night so

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dark that the light of day does not break after it. There is never a storm so fierce that it is not followed by peace and sunshine. Never is life so full of bitterness and woe that God does not have waiting some rich blessing for that life. Courage, then! Is the burden heavy? He will help us bear it. Is the heart sad? He knows the heart's bitterness. Is our sky dark? The day will dawn, and we shall yet sing for joy.

Yet we do give way to the temptation to think that God has forgotten us and his promise to be with us. Sometimes it seems to us that God has so many more important things to think of that he cannot be expected to remember about our needs. Then we must remind ourselves that he has promised to be with his people; that is enough. He "is not a man, that he should lie." His word is never forgotten. Long years before the Israelites were taken into captivity the return from the captivity was promised. Centuries before Christ came into the world God told of his coming. Ages before we were born God thought about us, made plans for us, and he is only waiting our leave to carry out his plans, to let us read his thoughts, to love us freely.

There are those who are perfectly ready to say they will believe in God's love if he does certain things, but that his failure to do these things will make them doubt. This is not faith. To the Christian God is God and God is good, though the heavens fall. The faith of Daniel's friends who were cast into the furnace would not have been disturbed if God had not seen fit to deliver them from the fire. It was enough for

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them to know that God is able to deliver his own. Just how he will deliver them, or when, is another matter, which can safely be left with him.

There are those who are ready to trust in God if they can see just how he is going to take care of them. But is that trust? There are others who are ready to trust God absolutely, whether they can see or not; they are perfectly willing to trust him in the dark. That was the way the widow to whom God sent Elijah trusted God. She believed God's Word, and was ready to do his will, even if it seemed most unlikely that there could be any issue but starvation for herself and her boy. Such faith as that is always justified by results.

God makes sure provision for those who obey him, according to his knowledge of their needs. He knows that it is not always best to give us the satisfaction of seeing an ample supply of creature comforts ahead of us, enough for many years; but if we are doing his will, we can count on him to give us what we need when we need it. When the waters of Cherith were gone, and not till then, God showed Elijah the way to find more water. When the widow's last portion of meal was gone, and not till then, God gave her another measure. Elijah knew it would be so; therefore he did not spoil his enjoyment of the blessings he had by mournful doubts as to what he would do when these were gone. Why do we not follow his example? Why do we doubt and fret and fear? Why are we so like the old fisherman in the sketch by "Jennette Lee," who said:

"I used to fret about everything—fretted for fear

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it would blow, and for fear it wouldn't blow. I never put down a net nor a lobster-pot that I didn't see 'em bein' chewed up or knocked to pieces. I'd see a shark swimmin' right through a big hole—rip-p-p-tear! I could see it as plain as if I was down under the water. I can see it just the same now if I shut my eyes, only it's fishes I see swimmin' into my net now—shoals of 'em. They ain't a shark in sight!"

Nor will there be anything really disquieting in the sight of those who heed the message of him who said: "Fear thou not; for I am with thee; be not dismayed; for I am thy God; I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness."

LVI

THE FAITH OF A LEPER

WHEN Mary Reed discovered that she was a leper, she had been a missionary in India for five years, and had been in America for her health for several months.

At once she made her arrangements to return to India, deciding that God had permitted her to contract the disease in order that she might be his messenger to the afflicted lepers of India. "Not with a sigh, but with a song," she prayed, "thy will be done."

To one member of her family only, her sister Rena, did she tell of her disease and her purpose in returning to India, for she wished to spare others the pain of what she felt must prove a last farewell. When she told her parents of her purpose to return to India at once, she begged them to let her go without a good-by kiss. So, on July 7, 1891, she left them.

Specialists in London and Paris confirmed the verdict of American physicians, that she was a victim of leprosy. Her right forefinger was insensible to pain in the first two joints, and there was a leprous spot on one cheek.

Not until she arrived in Bombay did she remove the seal of silence from her sister's lips. Then, on learning that a friend had written the facts to New York, and fearing that the receipt of news from others would kill her parents, she wrote to her mother:

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"After prayerful consideration, I find it wisest and kindest to tell you, or to have dear, brave-hearted Sister Rena tell, with whom I intrusted this mystery of God's Providence, to tell you what she pledged to keep from you. She will tell you how our loving Heavenly Father, who is 'too wise to err,' has, in his infinite love and wisdom, chosen, called, and prepared your daughter to teach lessons of patience, endurance, and submission, while I shall have the joy of ministering to a class of people who, but for the preparation which has been mine for this special work, would have no helper at all; and while I am called apart with these needy creatures who hunger and thirst for salvation, and for comfort and cheer, he, who has called and cheered me, promises that he, himself, will be to me as a little sanctuary, where I am to abide, and abiding in him, I shall have a supply of all my needs."

To a friend who asked her why she was returning to India, when it was evident she was in poor health, she said, "My Father knows the way I go, and I am sure it is the right way." When, later, the friend learned the real reason for the missionary's return, she suggested that prayer be made for recovery; the brave leper replied:

"I have not yet received any assurance of healing; perhaps I can serve my Father better thus." Always this was her spirit, as she indicated by her frequent singing of the words:

"No chance has brought this ill to me,
'Tis God's sweet will, so let it be;
He seeth what I cannot see.
There is a need be for each pain,
And he will make it one day plain
That earthly loss is heavenly gain."

THE FAITH OF A LEPER

Miss Reed became Superintendent of the Asylum for Lepers at Chandag, where she began to be a source of great joy to the sufferers. A visitor, who found her soon after the beginning of her work, wrote:

"She was binding up, with her own hands, the horrible wounds, and speaking soothing words of comfort to those poor distressed ones. It has always been a trial to her to witness suffering in others, yet she is most devoted in her attention, and so gentle and kind. We were very much surprised to find her so active and cheerful, and looking so well. She told us she had never felt better in health, more cheerful in spirits, nor happier in service than she does now."

The visitor went on to say that the state of her feelings was "not the result of any medical treatment she has adopted, as she gave up all treatment of that sort under a strong sense that God only required of her faith in him and in his holy power."

The remedies she denied herself she gladly used for the lepers in her charge, for she felt this as surely a part of her work as she believed it to be a part of her life to leave herself absolutely in God's hands. She trusted in his grace, and always she found it sufficient.

"The everlasting arms are underneath, upholding and keeping me trustful," she wrote in 1892. "I find the love of Jesus adequate consolation, soothing and cheering my heart."

Again she quoted from Ruskin: "In our whole life-melody the music is broken off here and there by 'rests,' and we foolishly think that we have come to the end of the tune. God sends a time of forced leisure, a time of sickness and disappointed plans, and

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makes a sudden pause in the choral hymn of our lives, and we lament that our voices must be silent and our part missing in the music which ever goes up to the ear of the Creator. . . . Not without design does God write the music of our lives. Be it ours to learn the time and not be discouraged at the 'rests.' If we look up, God will beat the time for us."

She rejoiced as, one by one, the lepers became Christians. In December, 1893, she was able to say that of the fifty-nine inmates of the asylum, all but six were Christians. Not only so, but there were marked transformations in the way of those who had been Christians. "Gentleness, patience, and peace are now manifest in the lives of some who, one year ago, were unhappy and so quarrelsome that I was often called several times daily to settle differences," she testified.

As the disease became more marked, her sufferings increased. But she had no complaint to make. "I am kept through all," she wrote, in 1897. "The 'Friend that sticketh closer than a brother, is so tender, and his presence is salvation from sin and from care. His love satisfieth."

The work of the asylum would have been tremendous for a strong woman, for there were supplied only two assistants, both natives. The strain of looking after the establishment was terrific, but she testified that God helped her in answer to her daily prayer for help. And she was glad.

Years passed, and still Mary Reed's work of faith went on. The progress of the disease seemed to be stayed, and she was able to work with more comfort. Gradually the institution was improved, until it became

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one of the finest leper asylums in the world. Scores were brought to share her faith in Jesus Christ, and the last days of hundreds were brightened by the ministry of the devoted woman who heard God's call to go out to the verge of the Himalayas in his service.

A letter written to her sister Rena on August 20, 1899, gives a wonderful glimpse of Miss Reed's life of faith.

" 1891-1899. Eight years. Yes, eight years. But the promise, 'Lo! I am with you alway,' or, as the Revised Version of the Bible says, 'all the days' is true.

" It was sweet and good of you to remember to write me on the morning of July 7th. I, too, was reminded on that day, six weeks ago, that it was the anniversary of a day never to be forgotten by you and me. I lived over again the scene in the little corner bedroom that morning and at the railroad station at Beckett's, and oh, the heart-breaking memories of dear mother's last look, and of father's trustful prayer for me at the family altar that morning, and the good-bys! Ah, there will be no good-by in heaven. No more parting, no more tears, no sickness, no sinners, no Satan! Satan is very much alive and very busy and nianifest here these days, but I cherish the blessed hope that these are 'the latter days' of which we read in the Gospels. . . .

" As father used to sing while at work in the shop:

" ' Messiah will reign, despite all his foes:
His mandates are fraught with gladness and peace,
His kingdom, blood-bought, must ever increase;
Till the whole earth be filled with the knowledge
Of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.'

" Now, how am I to reply to your questions, ' Do you not think you will come home again? It is not im-

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possible, is it?' For I don't know yet. And I am not in the habit of thinking out plans for the future. I simply know that my heart would greatly rejoice should it prove to be the Lord's plan that we should all meet once more in our earthly home. Sometimes the star of hope does rise in my heart, that he does prepare this joy for us, but then the tiny star sets again and new lessons of patience, trust, waiting, and some little suffering are given to be learned. I am not quite so well during the past week, though I am not really ill." . . .

Seven years longer the disease manifested itself. The affected finger continued lifeless, and finally burst open. "But by 1906," to quote the words of W. M. Danner, Secretary of the Mission to Lepers, "through the providence of God, in answer to the faith of his people and the prayers offered on her behalf, the disease became arrested. The finger regained its normal condition. The anesthetic patch on her cheek resumed its sensitiveness. Her physical condition was so greatly improved that she was advised she could make a home journey once more without the slightest danger of transmitting the disease to anyone.

"You won't go back, will you?" was the first question that greeted her when she reached the Ohio home. "Oh, yes!" was the reply. "Half of my heart is already in India." She remained but a month, then was off to the work for the suffering to which she felt she had been peculiarly set apart.

After seven years more she has given to her charges, she wrote to Mr. Danner: "I am still kept in wonderfully good health, as the disease is seemingly holden.

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This is to God's praise, and deeply and humbly thankful my heart is to him who thus continues to manifest his saving power through the Great Physician, our blessed Lord and Saviour.

"I shall be fifty-nine my next birthday, December fourth, and I begin to realize it will be necessary to lay down some of the duties, or make them over to some one whom the Lord will, I trust, call in due time to help with correspondence, accounts, etc., in the work here."

So, "in a strength which is distinctly God-given, she labors on in faith and hope," Mr. Danner writes, "receiving a present reward in the knowledge that in the deepest sense it is still true that 'the lepers are cleansed.' "

LVII

“THE LORD IS MY SHEPHERD”¹

HERE is a song of one hundred and seventeen words about which perhaps more has been written than about any other poem ever composed. It was written by a Jew several thousand years ago, but it is as fresh to-day as when it was first sung. It is called the Twenty-third Psalm, and is a song for all men, of every age, of every station in life. For three thousand years its words have fallen from the lips of those waiting to pass from beds of pain into the presence of the Saviour. They have been spoken tremblingly by those whose many years of life have revealed to them their dependence on God; by men and women in the full tide of strength; and by young men and women eagerly looking out on life which they felt was all before them. They have been lisped by little children who knew little of what sin and suffering mean, but they have known the Shepherd, and have put their trust in him.

When in 1681 Isabel Alison and Isabel Harvie were put to death at Edinburgh for their faithfulness to the terms of the Scottish Covenant, they sang this song. In 1834, as he lay dying, Edward Irving, a deposed minister of the Scotch Presbyterian Church, conscious

¹ See Prothero’s “The Psalms in Human Life,” and Stoddart’s “The Old Testament in Life and Literature.”

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of the righteousness of his life, slowly repeated the same matchless words. In 1712, Joseph Addison wrote in *The Spectator* one of the most famous versions of the Psalm. Macaulay says in his essay on Addison: "Of the Psalms his favorite was that which represents the Ruler of all things under the endearing image of a shepherd, whose crook guides the flock safe through gloomy and desolate glens, to meadows well watered and rich with herbage. On that goodness to which he ascribed all the happiness of his life he relied in the hour of death with the love that casteth out fear." As a child Byron was taught the simple words, and never forgot them, while Ruskin rejoiced that he had learned them in childhood. He declared that seven of the Psalms, of which the twenty-third was one, when "well studied and believed, suffice for all personal guidance."

When James Russell Lowell was twenty-five years old he wrote to a bereaved friend: "The older I grow, the less am I affected by the outward observance and form of religion and the more confidingness and trustingness do I feel toward God. He leadeth me in green pastures. Trust in Providence is no longer a meaningless phrase to me. The thought of it has oftener brought happy tears into my eyes than any other thought except that of my beloved Maria. It is therefore no idle form when I tell you to lean on God. I know that it is needless to say this to you, but I know also that it is always sweet and comforting to have our impulses seconded by the sympathy of our friends.

"We are tall enough to reach God's hand,
The angels are no taller."

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Sir William Hamilton, the philosopher, in 1856, when he was dying, was consoled by the words of verse four, "Thy rod and thy staff they comfort me." John Howard, the father of prison reform, fearlessly making his investigations in the damp, unwholesome cells, ill lighted and badly ventilated, where prisoners were confined without exercise or employment, facing small-pox and jail fever, strengthened himself by the remembrance of this Psalm. "Trusting," he says, "in divine providence, and believing myself in the way of my duty, I visit the most noxious cells, and while so doing 'I fear no evil.'" Alexander Duff, missionary of the Presbyterian Church of Scotland to India, made the Psalms his daily food. On one of his perilous journeys in the Himalayas he saw a native shepherd followed by his flock. The man frequently stopped and looked back. If he saw a sheep drawing too near the edge of the precipice, he would go back and apply his crook to one of the hind legs, and gently pull it back till the animal joined the rest. Going up to the shepherd, he noticed that he had a long rod, as tall as himself, and twisted around the lower half of a thick bar of iron. The region was infested with wolves and other dangerous animals, which in the night time prowled about the place where the sheep lay. With his long rod the shepherd could strike the animal such a blow as would make it flee. This brought to the remembrance of the traveler the expression of David, the shepherd, "Thy rod and thy staff, they comfort me," and saved it, as he thought, from the charge of tautology, the staff referring to God's hold of the sheep, the rod to his defense against his enemies. When he himself lay dying, and

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apparently unconscious, his daughter repeated for him the Twenty-third Psalm, and he responded at the end of each verse.

Austin Abbott, at one time dean of the New York University Law School, once said, when speaking of the words, "Thy rod and thy staff they comfort me": "At my father's house there is a little closet where were kept canes and walking-sticks. In my visits to the old house, when my father and I are going out for a walk, we often go to the cane closet and pick out our sticks. In this I have frequently been reminded of the saying that the Word of God is a staff. How often have I selected from the armory of the interpreter a text suited to the present exigency!"

"During the war, when the season of impending disaster was upon us, the verse, 'He shall not be afraid of evil tidings; his heart is fixed, trusting in the Lord,' was a staff to walk with many dark days. When death took away our child and left us almost broken-hearted, I found another staff in the promise that 'weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning.' When, in impaired health, I was exiled for a year, I took with me this staff, which never failed: 'He knoweth the thoughts that he thinketh toward thee, thoughts of peace and not of evil.' In times when human judgment has seemed to be set at naught, I have found it easy to go forward with this staff: 'In quietness and in confidence shall be your strength.'

"I wish that our young men, instead of stumbling purposely, as so many do, over what seems to them repugnant or repulsive in the Scripture, would choose daily from the armory a staff suited to the walk of

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the day, and they would soon come to possess many favorite because helpful passages in constant remembrance."

The Twenty-third Psalm is a personal possession for every Christian. Again and again it has been pointed out that if the first verse began, "The Lord is a shepherd," it is not likely that men and women and children for three thousand years would have counted it one of their priceless possessions. But the phrase is, "The Lord is my shepherd." He gives individual attention and care to his sheep; he calls them each by name. God knows and cares for us each one just as well as if that one were the only being in the universe. "The Lord is my shepherd."

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